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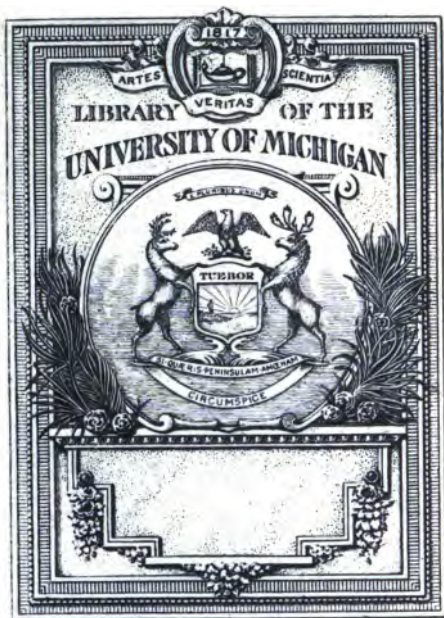
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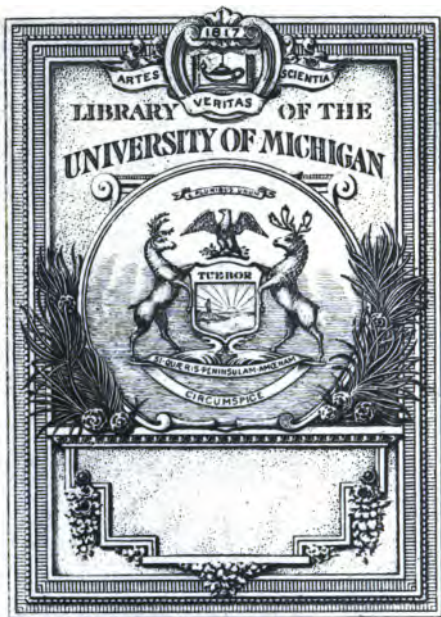
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PATRONAGE.

VOL. IV.

C. Wood, Printer, Poppin's Court, Fleet Street,
London.

PATRONAGE.

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF FASHIONABLE LIFE," "BELINDA,"
"LEONORA," &c.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

"Above a Patron,—though I condescend
"Sometimes to call a Minister my friend."

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON AND CO.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1814.

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Summers
Com. in
2-13-47
5742

PATRONAGE.

CHAPTER XXXV. *Elizabeth*

THE object, that Lady Jane had in view, was to prevent Caroline from discouraging by premature candor a passion, which she saw rising in the heart of a young nobleman.

Lord William * * * * , who was

“ Well pleas’d to ’scape from flattery to wit,”

had always preferred Lady Jane Granville’s company to the society of those who courted him more, or with less delicacy. Since Miss Caroline Percy’s arrival, and appearance in town, Lady

Jane had, to do her justice, preserved with his Lordship exactly the same even tenor of conduct; whatever her wishes might be, she had too much proper pride to compromise her own, or her young friend's dignity. Moreover, her Ladyship had sense and knowledge of character sufficient to perceive, that such a sacrifice, or the least appearance of a disposition to make it, would be not only degrading, but vain: it would, she knew, for ever disgust and ruin them in the opinion of a man, who had infinitely more penetration and feeling, than those who flattered him were aware that he possessed.

Lord William had excellent abilities, knowledge, and superior qualities of every sort, all depressed by excessive timidity, to such a degree, as to be almost useless to himself, and to others. Whenever he was either for the business, or pleasure of life, to meet or mix with numbers, the whole man was, as it were, snatched from himself. He was subject to that night-

mare of the soul, who sits herself upon the human breast, oppresses the heart, palsies the will, and raises spectres of dismay, which the sufferer combats in vain — that cruel enchantress, who hurls her spell even upon childhood, and, when she makes the youth her victim, pronounces,

“Henceforward you shall never appear in your natural character. — Innocent, you shall look guilty. — Wise, you shall look silly. — Never shall you have the use of your natural faculties. — That which you wish to say, you shall not say — that which you wish to do, you shall not do, — you shall appear reserved, when you are enthusiastic, — insensible, when your heart sinks into melting tenderness. — In the presence of those you most wish to please, you shall be most awkward, — and when approached [by her you love, you shall become lifeless as a statue, under the irresistible spell of *mauvaise honte*.”

Strange that France should give a name to that malady of the mind, which she

never knew, or of which she knows less than any other nation upon the surface of the civilized globe!

Under the spell of *mauvaise honte* poor Lord William — labored — fast bound — and bound the faster by all the efforts made for his relief by the matrons and young damsels, who crowded round him continually. — They were astonished that all their charms, and all the encouragement they held out, failed to free this young nobleman from his excessive timidity. —

“What a pity! it was only his fault; they were sure!” — “Ten thousand pities he could not be made to speak, they were certain he had a vast deal to say,” — “And he could be so agreeable, they were confident, if he would. — Most extraordinary that a man of his rank and fortune, whom every creature admired, should be so timid.”

True — but the timid Lord William all the time esteemed himself more highly, than these ladies affected to admire him.

— Mixed with his apparent timidity, there was a secret pride. — Conscious of the difference between what he was, and what he appeared to be, he was at once mortified and provoked, and felt disdain and disgust for those who pretended to admire his outward man, or who paid to his fortune that tribute, which he thought due to his merit. — With some few, some very few, by whom he was appreciated, his pride and his timidity were equally at ease, his reserve vanished in an astonishing manner, and the man came out of the marble. Of this small number in his confidence Lady Jane Granville was one. Even from his boyish years she had discerned the worth and value of Lord William, — and he now distinguished her by his grateful and constant regard. — But Lady Jane Granville, though a woman of considerable talents, could not be a judge of the whole of his mind, or the extent of his powers, — her talent was chiefly wit — her knowledge, knowledge of the world, — her mind cultivated.

but slightly, and for embellishment, — his deeply, extensively, and with large views. — When he became acquainted with Miss Caroline Percy, he soon found, that to her all this appeared, and by her was justly valued. — His assiduity in cultivating his friend, Lady Jane's acquaintance, increased; and his taste for the conversation at her house became so great, that he was always the first, and usually the last at her parties. — His morning visits were frequent and long, — he knew, by instinct, the hours when the two ladies were disengaged, but not always so exactly the time when he ought to take leave. — His ear never informed him when Lady Jane's carriage came to the door, nor did he always hear the servant announce it's being in readiness. — Her Ladyship might fidget as much as her politeness would permit without danger of it's being observed. — His Lordship never was awakened to the sense of it's being necessary to stir, till Miss Caroline Percy, by some strong indication, such as

putting away her drawing, and the books, or by plainly saying, "We must go out now,"—made it manifest to him, that he must depart. — For this Caroline was regularly reproved afterwards by Lady Jane—but she never found, that it gave Lord William any offence; nor did she for some time observe, that it caused him much disquietude. He seemed to her to stay from mere habitual absence of mind, and unwillingness to remove from a retreat where he was safe and comfortable, to some place where he was liable to be annoyed by his fair persecutors. That he liked her company and conversation, she did not affect to deny, nor could she doubt that he felt for her esteem and regard,—he expressed both, and he was not a man to express more than he felt, or the truth of whose professions could be suspected. But she thought, that his regard for her, and for Lady Jane, were both of the same nature, and equally free from any mixture of more tender sentiments.—She thought him a *friend*, not

lover. — This was not with Caroline a mere commonplace phrase. — She believed this to be true, — and at the time she believed it, she was right. But constantly in the society of an amiable, sensible, and beautiful young woman, a man of feeling, taste, and understanding, whose heart is disengaged, usually finds the passage from friendship to love so easy and rapid, as to be scarcely perceptible. — And to this, which generally happens in similar circumstances, Lord William was peculiarly liable. For though, from the crowds who courted his attention, it might seem, that his liberty of choice was unlimited, yet, in fact, his power of choosing was contracted and reduced to the few, “whom choice and passion both approve.” Among these few his fastidious judgment, and his apprehensions of domestic disquietude, saw frequently, and sometimes too justly, objection to the family connexion of the young lady. — Some want of union in it — want of principle, or train of dissipation, which he

dreaded, — every folly he disliked; — so that among the numbers of his own rank who sought his alliance, it was not easy for him to satisfy himself, even as to connexion. — Still more difficult to satisfy him as to Love, “the modern fair one’s jest,” or, what is worse, her affectation. — His Lordship was well aware, that among the numbers of young ladies; who were ready at a moment’s warning to marry him, not one of these would love him for his own sake. — Now in common with Marmontel’s Alcibiades, and with most men of rank, who have any superiority of character, Lord William had an anxious desire, to be loved for his own sake; — for though, in the opinion of most people of the world, and of some philosophers, the circumstances of rank and fortune form a part of personal merit; yet as these are not indissolubly associated with the individual, his Lordship rather preferred affection, and esteem arising from merit, of which he could not be deprived by any revolution.

of fate, or turn of fancy. Whatever signs of esteem or regard he could obtain from Miss Caroline Percy, he knew to be perfectly sincere; if he was ever loved by her, he knew it would be *for his own sake*, and of the constancy of her affection, if once obtained, the whole tenor of her character and conduct gave him the most secure pledge. — Miss Percy's education, manners, talents, and beauty, were all such as perfectly suited, and would do honor, and would grace the highest rank of life. She had no fortune, — but that was of no consequence to him — he was likely to have a princely income — he had no debts, he had at present all that satisfied his wishes, and that could enable him to live married, as well as single, in a manner that suited his station. — His friends eager to have him marry, and almost despairing of his complying, in this point, with their wishes, left him entirely at liberty in his choice. — And his reason and passion now both determined on that choice, just about the

time when English Clay proposed for Caroline, and when the conversation about *declarations* and *refusals* had passed between her and Lady Jane. — That conversation, instead of changing or weakening the opinions Caroline then expressed, had confirmed her in her own sentiments, by drawing out more fully the strength of the reasons, and the honorable nature of the feelings, on which they were founded. — Some slight circumstances, such as she could scarcely state in words, occurred about this time, which first gave her the idea, that Lord William — felt for her more than esteem. — The tender interest he showed one day when she had a slight indisposition, — the extreme alarm he expressed one night, when there happened an embarrassment between their carriages at the door of the opera-house, by which Lady Jane's visit was nearly overturned, — an alarm much greater than Caroline thought the occasion required, was succeeded by anger against his coachman, so

much more violent and vehement, than the error or offence justified, or than his Lordship had ever before been seen to show . . . These things, which in a man of gallantry might mean nothing, but to show his politeness, from Lord William—seemed indicative of something more.—

Caroline began to see, that the friend might become a lover, and now, for the first time, questioned her own heart.—

She thought highly of Lord William's abilities and character—She saw, as she had once said to Lady Jane, “ signs which convinced her, that this volcano covered with snow, and often enveloped in clouds, would at some time burst forth in torrents of fire.” — Little indication as Lord William now showed to common observers of being or of becoming an orator, Caroline perceived in him the soul of oratory ; and she foresaw, that on some great occasion, from some great motive, he would at once vanquish his timidity, and burst forth upon the senate. She felt convinced that—whether elo-

quent or silent, speaking, or acting, in public or private life, Lord William—would in every situation, in every circumstance of trial, fill and sustain the character, of an upright, honorable, enlightened English nobleman.—Notwithstanding that Caroline thought thus highly of him, Count Altenberg, in her opinion, far surpassed him in the qualities they both possessed, and excelled in many, in which Lord William was deficient—in manner especially; and manner goes a great way in Love, even with people of the best understanding.—Besides all the advantages of manner, Count Altenberg had far superior talents, or at least far superior habits of conversation—he was altogether as estimable, and more agreeable than his rival. He also had had the advantage of finding Caroline's mind disengaged—he had cultivated her society in the country, where he had time and opportunity to develop his own character and hers.—In one word, he had made the first impression on

Caroline's heart—and such an impression, once made on a heart like hers, cannot be easily effaced. Though there seemed little chance of his returning to claim his place in her affections, though she had made the most laudable efforts to banish him from her recollection, yet “*en pers-
suet qu'il faut qu'on oublie, on se souvient.*” — And now she found, that not only all others compared with him were inferior, and indifferent to her, but that any, whom she was forced to put in comparison and competition with Count Altenberg, immediately sunk in her opinion.

Thus distinctly knowing her own mind, Caroline was, however, still in doubt as to Lord William's, and afraid of mistaking the nature of his sentiments. She well remembered Lady Jane's cautions; and though she was fully resolved to spare by her candor the suspense and pain, which coquetry might create and prolong, yet it was necessary to be certain that she read aright, and therefore to wait for something more decisive, by

which to interpret his meaning. — Lady Jane wisely forbore all observations on the subject, and never said or looked a word, that could recal the memory of her former debate. With the most scrupulous, almost haughty delicacy, and the most consummate prudence, she left things to take their course, secure of what the end would be.

One night Lady Jane and Caroline were to be at a party. — When they arrived, they detected Lord William in the midst of a group of the fair and fashionable, looking as if he was suffering martyrdom. His eye caught Caroline as she passed, and his colour changed. The lady next him put up her glass, to look for the cause of that change of colour — but the glass was put down again, and no apprehensions excited. — By degrees Lord William worked his way towards Caroline — No, not towards Caroline, but to Lady Jane Cavendish. — The company near her were talking of a proposal, which a gen-

tleman had lately made for a celebrated beauty—His suit had been rejected. Some said, that the lady must have seen that he was attached to her, and that she had been to blame, in allowing him so long to pay her attentions, if she was determined to refuse him at last — Others defended the lady, saying, that the gentleman had never made a distinct declaration, and that therefore the lady was *quite correct*, in not appearing to know that his attentions meant any thing more than was avowed — Lord William listened, perfectly silent; and with an appearance of some anxiety. — Lady Jane Granville supported warmly the same side of the question; which she had taken in a similar conversation with Caroline.

Miss Percy was appealed to for her opinion, “ Would it not be strange indeed, if a lady were to reject a gentleman before she was asked? ”

Lord William with increasing anxiety listened, but dared not look at Caroline, who with becoming modesty, but with

firmness in what she believed to be right, answered, " that if a woman saw that a gentleman loved her, and felt that she could not return his attachment, she might, without any rude or premature rejection, simply by a certain ease of manner, which every man of sense knows how to interpret, mark the difference between esteem and tenderer sentiments; and might, by convincing him that there was no chance of his obtaining any further interest in her heart, prevent his ever having the pain of a decided refusal."

The discussion ended here. Fresh company joined them; other subjects were started — Lord William continued silent, he did not take any share in any conversation, but was so absent and absorbed in his own thoughts, that several times he was spoken to, without his being able to give a plausible answer — Then he stood covered with confusion — confusion increasing from the sense that it was observed, and could not be con-

quered. — The company moved different ways, but his Lordship continued fixed near Caroline — At last the attention of all near him was happily diverted and drawn away from him by the appearance of some new and distinguished person — He seized the moment, and summoned courage sufficient to address some slight question to Caroline — She answered him with an ease of manner, which he felt to be unfavorable to his wishes. — The spell was upon him, and he could not articulate — a dread silence might have ensued, but that Lady Jane happily went on saying something about pine apple ice. — Lord William assented implicitly, without knowing to what, and replied,

“ Just so — exactly so ” —

to contradictory assertions, and if he had been asked at this instant, whether what he was eating was hot or cold, he could not have been able to decide. — Lady Jane composedly took a biscuit, and enjoyed the passing scene, observing,

that this was "the pleasantest party she had been at this season."

Mrs. Crabstock came up, and Lady Jane, with wit at will, kept the pattern lady in play by an opportunely recollected tale of scandal; with ears delighted, eyes rivetted, stood Mrs. Crabstock, while Lord William, again relieved from the fear of observation, breathed once more, and, partly recovering his senses through the mist that hung over him, looked at Caroline, in hopes of drawing some encouraging omen from her countenance. — He had come to this party, determined to say something that should explain to her his sentiments. — He thought he could speak to her better in a crowd than alone. — Now or never! said he to himself. With desperate effort, and with an oppressed voice, he said . . . the very thing he did not mean to say.

"Miss Percy, I never was so inclined in all my life to quarrel with ease of manner in any body as in you." — Then,

correcting himself, and blushing deeply, he added, "I don't mean that I don't admire your ease of manner in *general* — but . . . in short, it is impossible, I think, that with your penetration, you can be in any doubt as to my sentiments. — If I thought"

He stopped short — he felt as if his life hung upon a thread — as if the first look, the first sound of her voice, the next word spoken, must decide his fate. — He longed, yet feared to see that look, and to hear that word.

"And I think it is impossible, that, with your Lordship's penetration, you should mistake mine," said Caroline.

There was an ingenuous sweetness in her look and voice, a fear of giving pain, yet a resolution to be sincere. — Lord William felt and understood it all. — He saw there was no hope. — Caroline heard from him a deep sigh. — With great and painful emotion, in the most calm voice, she could command, but in the kindest tone, she added,

"For the sentiments of regard and esteem your Lordship has expressed for me, believe me, I am truly grateful . . ."

Mrs. Crabstock moved toward them, and Caroline paused.

"Are you to be at Lady Arrowsmith's concert to-morrow, my Lord?" said Mrs. Crabstock, who was now at liberty to ask questions, for even scandal will not hold curiosity in check for ever.

"Are you to be at Lady Arrowsmith's, my Lord, to-morrow night?" repeated she, for her first attack was unheard.

"I do not know, indeed," said he, starting from his fit of absence.

Mrs. Crabstock persisted. "Were you at the opera last night, my Lord?"

"I really, Ma'am, do not recollect."

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Crabstock!

And "Bless me!" cried Lady Jane Granville, "we are to be at the Duchess of Greenwich's ball; Caroline, my dear — time for me to move. — My Lord, might I trouble your Lordship to ask if our carriage is to be had?"

Lord William, before she had completed the request, obeyed. As they went down the stair-case, Lady Jane laughing said, "I am afraid I shall be as impertinently curious as Mrs. Crabstock — I was going to ask your Lordship whether you are engaged to morrow, or whether you can come to us . . . to me?"

"*Unhappily*," — the accent on the word showed it was no expression of course. "Unhappily I cannot — I am engaged — I thank your Ladyship."

Lady Jane looked back at Caroline, who was a little behind her.

"Though I could not recollect in time to tell Mrs. Crabstock where I was last night, or where I am to be to morrow," continued his Lordship, making an effort to smile, "yet I *can* satisfy your Ladyship — I shall be at Tunbridge."

"Tunbridge!" — cried Lady Jane, stopping short, and turning to Lord William, as the light shone full on his face — "Tunbridge at this season?"

"All seasons are alike to me—all seasons and their change," replied Lord William, scarcely knowing what he answered—the powers of mind and body engrossed in suppressing emotion.

They had now reached the bottom of the stairs; a shawl of Lady Jane's was not to be found, and while the servants were searching for it, she and Caroline, followed by Lord William, went into one of the supper rooms, which was open.

"To Tunbridge!" repeated Lady Jane.—"No, my Lord, you must not leave us,"

"What is there to prevent me?" said Lord William, hastily, almost harshly; for, though at the time he felt her kindness, yet, irresistibly under the power of his demon, he said the thing he did not mean; his voice and look expressed the reverse of what his heart felt.

"Nay, if there is nothing to prevent your Lordship," said Lady Jane, walking away with dignity, "I have only to wish your Lordship a good journey."

"I would stay, if I could see any

thing to keep me," said Lord William — impelled, contrary to his better judgment, to appeal once more to Caroline's countenance. — Then cursed himself for his weakness. —

Lady Jane, turning back, saw his Lordship's look; and now, convinced that Caroline was to blame for all, reproached herself for misinterpreting his words and manner.

"Well, my Lord," cried she, "you will not be in such haste to set out for Tunbridge I am sure, as to go before you hear from me in the morning. — Perhaps I may trouble your Lordship with some commands."

His Lordship bowed, and said he should do himself the honor of waiting her Ladyship's commands. She passed on quickly towards the hall. Lord William offered his arm to Caroline.

"Lady Jane is my friend — she will not think of ceremony, when I must speak to you, Miss Percy . . . and have but a moment . . ."

Caroline walked more slowly.

"I thank you, Madam — Yes, I *do* thank you. — Much pain you have given. — But as little as you could. — Better now than later. — Like yourself — and I thank you for preserving the idea of excellence in my mind in all its integrity — in all . . . I shall detain you but a moment . . . You are not impatient."

"No," said Caroline, in a tremulous voice, yet, for his sake, as well as for the sake of her own consistency, trying to suppress emotion, which she thought he might misinterpret.

"Fear not — I shall not misinterpret — I know too well what love is. — Speak freely of my sentiments to Lady Jane, when I am gone — her friendship deserves it from me." —

He stopped — he was silent — they came within view of the servants — he walked quietly to the carriage — assisted her into it, pressed her hand —

"Farewell — for ever," he said in a low voice, and let it go.

The carriage-door was shut.

"Where to, my Lady?" — said the footman. — "The Duchess of Greenwich's, or home, Caroline?"

"Oh! home, if I may choose," said Caroline.

"Home!" said Lady Jane.

And the moment the glass was up, "Caroline, my dear, tell me this instant, what is all this between you and Lord William? — Is it as I hope? — or, is it as I fear? — speak."

Caroline could not, she was in tears.

"What *have* you done? — If you have said any thing irrevocable, and without consulting me, I never . . . never *will* forgive you, Caroline. — Speak at all events."

Caroline tried to obey her Ladyship.

"What have you done? — What have you said?"

"I have said the truth — I have done — I hope what I ought," said Caroline, — "but I have given great pain"

Lady Jane now perceiving by her

voice that she was in sorrow, spoke no more in anger, but checking herself, and changing her tone, said,

"It is not irremediable, my dear. — Whatever pain you may have given, you know the power to give pleasure is still in your own hands."

Caroline sighed — "Alas! no, Madam, it is not."

"Why so, my love. — He will not leave town in the morning without my commands. — And I am at your command. — A note, a line, a word, will set all to rights."

"But that word I cannot say."

"Then let me say it for you. — Trust your delicacy to me, I will be dignity itself. — Can you doubt it? — Believe me, much as I wish to see you what . . . and where you ought to be in society, I would not . . . there it is, begging Lady Frances Arlington's pardon, that Mrs. Falconer and I differ in character essentially, and *de fond en comble*. — I would never yield a point of real delicacy, I

would not descend the thousandth part of a degree from proper dignity, to make you — any more than to make myself — a Princess. Come, let me see you smile — and now, without reserve, open your heart, and tell me what you wish to have done or said."

"Nothing, my dear Lady Jane."

"Nothing! my dear Caroline! — nothing can come of nothing, speak again."

"I have no more to say — I have said all I can say."

The carriage stopped at their own door.

"We are all in the dark," said Lady Jane; "when I have more light, I shall be able better to tell what we are about."

"Now I can see as well as hear," continued she, as her woman met her with lights. — "Keppel, you may go to bed, we shall not want you to night."

"Now, Caroline, take care — remember your countenance is open to me — if not your heart."

"Both, both are open to you, my dear friend," cried Caroline. "And Lord William, who said you deserved it from him, desired me to speak as freely for him, as for myself."

"He's a noble creature There's the difference between reserve of character, and reserve of manner — I always said so. — Go on, my dear."

Caroline related every thing that had passed; and Lady Jane, when she had finished, said;

"A couple of children! — But a couple of charming children — Now I, that have common sense, must set it all to rights, and turn *no* prettily into *yes*."

"It cannot be done" — said Caroline.

"Pardon me, solemn fair one, it can."

"Pardon me, my dear Lady Jane, it *must* not be done."

"Children should not say *must*," cried Lady Jane, in a playful tone; for never did she feel in more delightful spirits

than this moment, when all her hopes for Caroline, as she thought, were realized; "and to complete '*the pleasing history*,' no obstacle remained," she said, "but the Chinese mother-of-pearl curtain of etiquette to be withdrawn, by a dexterous delicate hand, from between *Shu-y-Ping-Sin* and her lover." Lady Jane, late as it was at night, took up a pen, to write a note to Lord William.

"What are you going to do . . . may I ask, my dear Madam?" cried Caroline.

"My dear Madam, I am going my own way — let me alone."

"But if you mean to write for me . . ."

"For you! — Not at all — for myself, I beg to see Lord William in the morning, to trouble him with my 'commands.'"

"But seriously, my dear Lady Jane, do not give him unnecessary pain — for my mind is decided."

"So every young lady says — It is a

rated case—for the first three days”
—— Lady Jane wrote on as fast as she could.

“My dear Lady Jane,” cried Caroline, stopping her Ladyship’s hand—“I am in earnest.”

“So, then,” cried Lady Jane, impatiently—“You will not trust me—You will not open your heart to me, Caroline.”

“I do . . . I have trusted you entirely, my dear friend—My heart . . . I opened to you long ago”——

A dead pause—and blank consternation in Lady Jane’s countenance.—

“But surely . . . since *then* it must have changed?”

“Not in the least.”

“But it will change . . . let Lord William try to change it.”

Caroline shook her head—“It will not—I cannot—”

“And you won’t do this, when I ask it as a favor for my friend, my particular friend?”

“Excuse me, dear, kind Lady Jane, I know you wish only my happiness, but this would make me unhappy — It is the only thing you could ask with which I would not comply.”

“Then I’ll never ask any thing else while I live from you, Miss Percy,” cried Lady Jane, rising and throwing her pen from her — “You are resolved to throw your happiness from you — do so — Wish your happiness? — yes, I have wished it anxiously — ardently — but now I have done — You are determined to be perverse and philosophical — Good night to you” —

Lady Jane snatched up her candle, and, in haste, retired — Caroline, sensible that all her Ladyship’s anger at this moment arose from warm affection, was the more sorry to have occasioned it, and to feel that she could not, by yielding, allay it instantly — — A sleepless night. —

Early in the morning, Keppel, half-dressed and not half awake, came, with

her Ladyship's love, and begged to speak a word to Miss Percy.

"*Love!*" repeated Caroline, as she went to Lady Jane's apartment—"how kind she is!"

"My dear, you have not slept, I see — nor I either — but I am sure you have forgiven my hastiness" said Lady Jane, raising herself on her pillow.

Caroline kissed her affectionately.

"And let these tears, my dearest Caroline," continued Lady Jane, "be converted into tears of joy—for my sake—for your own family—for your own sake, my sweet girl, be advised, and don't throw away your happiness for life—Here's a note from Lord William—he waits my commands—that's all—Let me only desire to see him"

"On my account? I cannot," said Caroline—the tears streaming down her face, though she spoke calmly.

"Then it is your pride to refuse the

man, for whom every other young woman is sighing."

"No, believe me that I do not act from pride—I feel none—I have no reason to feel any—"

"No reason to feel pride! Don't you know . . . yes, you know as well as I do, that this is the man of men—the man on whom every mother's—every daughter's eye is fixed—The first unmarried nobleman now in England—the prize of prizes . . . The most excellent man you allow, and universally allowed to be the most agreeable."

"But if he be not so to me," said Caroline.

"That can only be because . . . you are conscious of the cause, Caroline . . . It is your own fault."

"And therefore I said, that I felt I had no reason to be proud," said Caroline.

"Then have reason to be proud; conquer this weakness, and then you may

have cause to be proud—You pique yourself on being reasonable; is it reasonable to leave your affections in the possession of a man, of whom, in all human probability, you will never hear more?”

“Too probable”—said Caroline.

“And will you, you Caroline Percy, like Lady Angelica Headingham, leave your heart at the mercy of a foreign *adventurer*?”

“Oh stop, Ma’am,” cried Caroline, patting her hand before Lady Jane’s mouth—“don’t say that word, any thing else I could bear——But if you knew him education, character, manners . . . no, you would not be so unjust—”

“You know you told me you were sensible you ought not to indulge such a weakness, Caroline.”

“I did—I am sensible of it . . . Oh you see I am . . . and my best . . . my very best have I done to drive him from my memory—And never, till I was

forced to make this comparison, did I recollect . . . did I feel . . . ——— Weak I may be," said Caroline, changing from great agitation to perfect decision — "but wicked I will not be — I will never marry one man, and love another — My own happiness if I sacrifice, mine be the consequence — but I will never injure the happiness of another — Do not, Madam, keep that noble heart, this excellent Lord William in suspense — What are your commands?"

"My commands!" ——— cried Lady Jane, raising her voice . . . trembling with anger — "Then this is your gratitude . . . this your generosity!"

"I must be just — I cannot be generous —"

"And this your affection for all your friends, all who wish for your happiness? — You would sacrifice nothing . . . nothing — no, not the slightest fancy, disgraceful fancy of your own, to please them — when you know how ardently too they wish to see you happily married."

“To marry to please others, against my own inclination . . . against my own conscience, must be weakness indeed — self-deception — for if my friends wish my happiness, and I make myself miserable, how can that please them! — Any sacrifice I could make, except that of principle, I would — But that I never will make, nor *will* my friends, nor *do* they desire it Forgive me, dear Lady Jane.”

“I never will forgive you,” interrupted Lady Jane — “Ring! — yes, ring the bell — And when rung, never expect my forgiveness.”

It must be done, thought Caroline, sooner or later —

“My compliments, Keppel, to Lord William,” said Lady Jane, “I have no commands to trouble him with . . . Stay, I must find something . . . that parcel for Mrs. Baggot, Tunbridge — I must write . . . I cannot write.”

With great difficulty, in the agitation of her mind and hand, Lady Jane wrote

a few lines, and holding the note up, looked at Caroline — a last appeal — in vain. —

“ Take it, Keppel — I’m sorry Lord William’s servant has been kept waiting ” — cried her Ladyship, and suddenly closed the curtain. — Caroline retired softly, hoping that Lady Jane might sleep, and sleep off her anger — But no — The morning past — the day past — and the sun went down upon her wrath. At night she would not, she could not go out any where. — Caroline, alone with her, endured a terrible tête à tête. Lady Jane never spoke, Caroline tried all she could, by affectionate kindness of look and voice, and by contrite gentleness, to sooth her perturbed spirit. Lady Jane’s anger admitted of no alleviation, her disappointment increased the more she reflected, and the more she thought of what others would think, if they could know it — And that they did not know, might never know it . . . (for Lady Jane was too honorable to

betray Lord William's secret) . . . was an additional mortification — It was not till after ninety-six hours, that Caroline perceived in her Ladyship any change for the better. The first favorable symptom was her giving vent to her natural feelings in the following broken sentences —

“After all my pains! When I was just thinking of writing to your father . . . When I might have carried you home in triumph, Lady William — A duke in all human probability — A duchess . . . absolutely a duchess you might have been . . . And such a well-informed — such an amiable man! — every thing your own family could have wished! — And Rosamond! — Ah, poor Rosamond — Rosamond, you little know! . . . And nobody will ever know — No creature will ever be a bit the wiser — If you would have let him even come to a declaration — properly, decently to a declaration — Let him attend you in public once or twice, your declared ad-

mirer . . . What harm could it possibly have done him, you, or any body! — Then there would have been some credit at least — and some comfort to me — But now, at the end of the campaign, just where we were before — The season over, and *au bout du compte*, under Lady Jane Granville's *chaperonage*, the beautiful Miss Caroline Percy has received one proposal and a quarter! — No, while I live, I will never forget it."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NO less an event than Alfred's marriage, no event calling less imperatively upon her feelings, could have recovered Lady Jane's sympathy for Caroline. But Alfred Perty, who had been the restorer of her fortune, her friend in adversity, what pain it would give him to find her, at the moment when he might expect her congratulations, quarrelling with his sister—that sister, too, who had left her home, where she was so happy, and Hungerford Castle, where she was adored, on purpose to tend Lady Jane in sickness and obscurity! —

Without being put exactly into these words, or, perhaps, into any words, thoughts such as these, with feelings of gratitude and affection, revived for Ca-

relieve in Lady Jane's mind the moment she heard of Alfred's intended marriage. —

“ Good young man! — Excellent friend! — Well! — tell me all about it, *my dear.*” —

It was the first time, that her Ladyship had said *my dear* to Caroline since the day of the fatal refusal.

Caroline was touched by this word of reconciliation — and the tears it brought into her eyes completely overcame Lady Jane, — who hastily wiped her own. —

“ So, my dear Caroline, ... where were we? — tell me about your brother's marriage when is it to be? —

How has it been brought about? — the last I heard of the Leicesters was the good Dean's death I remember pitying them very much — Were they not left in straitened circumstances, too? — Will Alfred have any fortune with Miss Leicester? — Tell me every thing Read me his letters.” —

To go back, to Doctor Leicester's

death. — For some months his preferments were kept in abeyance — Many were named, or thought of, as likely to succeed him. — The Deanery was in the gift of the crown, and, as it was imagined, that the vicarage was also at the disposal of government, applications had poured in, on all sides, for friends, and friend's friends, to the remotest link of the supporters of ministry. — But — to use their own elegant phrase — The hands of government were tied. —

— It seems, that in consequence of some parliamentary interest, formerly given opportunely, and in consideration of certain arrangements in his diocese, to serve persons whom ministers were obliged to oblige, a promise had long ago been given to Bishop Clay, — that his recommendation to the Deanery should be accepted on the next vacancy. The Bishop, who had promised the living to his sister's husband, now presented it to Mr. Buckhurst Falconer, with the important addition of Dr. Leicester's deanery.

To become a dean, was once the height of Buckhurst's ambition, that, for which, in a moment of elation, he prayed, scarcely hoping that his wishes would ever be fulfilled — yet now that his wish was accomplished, and that he had attained this height of his ambition, was he happy? — No! — far from it; farther than ever. — How could he be happy — dissatisfied with his conduct, and detesting his wife. — In the very act of selling himself to this beldam, — he abhorred his own meanness; but he did not know how much reason he should have to repent, till the deed was done. It was done in a hurry, with all the precipitation of a man, who hates himself for what he feels forced to do. Unused to bargain and sale in any way, in marriage never having thought of it before, Buckhurst did not take all precautions necessary, to make his sacrifice answer his own purpose. He did not fully know, he could not conceive, the avaricious temper and habits of his lady, till he was

hers past redemption. Whatever accession of income he obtained from his marriage he lived up to ; immediately, his establishment, his expenses surpassed his revenue. — His wife would not pay or advance a shilling beyond her stipulated quota to their domestic expenses. — He could not bear the parsimonious manner, in which she would have had him live, or the shabby style, in which she received his friends. He was more profuse in proportion as she was more niggardly, and whilst she scolded and grudged every penny she paid, he ran in debt magnanimously for hundreds. When the living and the deanery came into his possession, the second year's fruits had been eaten before hand. — Money he must have, and money his wife would not give — but a litigious proctor suggested to him a plan for raising it, by demanding a considerable sum from the executors of the late Dr. Leicester for what is called *dilapidation*. The parsonage-house seemed to be in good repair; but

to make out charges of dilapidation was not difficult to those, who understood the business — and fifteen hundred pounds were the charge presently made out against the executors of the late incumbent. —

It was invidious, it was odious for the new vicar, in the face of his parishioners, of all those who loved and respected his predecessor, to begin by making such a demand. — Especially as it was well known, that the late Dean had not saved any of the income of his preferment, but had disposed of it amongst his parishioners as a steward for the poor. He had left his family in narrow circumstances. They were proud of his virtues, and not ashamed of the consequences. With dignity and ease they retrenched their expenses; and after having lived as became the family of a dignitary of the church, on quitting the personage, the widow and her niece retired to a small habitation suited to their altered circumstances, and lived with respectable and respected economy. — The charge brought against them by :

Dean Falconer was an unexpected blow. It was an extortion, to which Mrs. Leicester would not submit — could not without injury to her niece, from whose fortune the sum claimed, if yielded, must be deducted.

Alfred Percy, from the first moment of their distress, from the time of good Dean Leicester's death, had been assiduous in his attentions to Mrs. Leicester, and by the most affectionate letters, and whenever he could get away from London by his visits to her and to his Sophia, had proved the warmth and constancy of his attachment. — Some months had now passed, he urged his suit, and besought Sophia no longer to delay his happiness. Mrs. Leicester wished, that her niece should now give herself a protector and friend, who might console her for the uncle she had lost. — It was at this period the *dilapidation charge* was made. — Mrs. Leicester laid the whole statement before Alfred, declaring that for his sake, as well as for her niece's, she was resolute to defend herself against injus-

tice. Alfred could scarcely bring himself to believe, that Buckhurst Falconer had acted in the manner represented, with a rapacity, harshness, and cruelty, so opposite to his natural disposition — Faults Alfred well knew that Buckhurst had ; but they were all, he thought, of quite a different sort from those, of which he now stood accused. What was to be done ? — Alfred was extremely averse from going to law with a man who was his relation, for whom he had early felt, and still retained a considerable regard. — Yet he could not stand by and see the woman he loved defrauded of nearly half the small fortune she possessed. On the other hand, he was employed as a professional man, and called upon to act. He determined, however, before he should, as a last resource, expose the truth and maintain the right in a court of justice, previously to try every means of conciliation in his power. To all his letters Dean Falconer answered evasively and unsatisfactorily by referring him to his proctor or his attorney, into whose hands

he said he had put the business, and he knew and wished nothing more about it. — The attorney — Solicitor Sharpe, was impracticable — The proctor was as bad. — Alfred resolved to see the Dean himself. — And this after much difficulty he at length effected. — He found the Dean and his lady tête-à-tête. — Their raised voices suddenly stopped short as he entered. — The Dean gave an angry look at his servant as Alfred came into the room. —

“Your servants,” said Alfred, “told me, that you were not at home, but I told them, that I knew Dean Falconer would be at home to an old friend.”

“You are very good (said Buckhurst) — you do me a great deal of honor,” said the Dean.

Two different manners appeared in the same person, one natural — belonging to his former; the other assumed, proper, as he thought, for his present self — or rather for his present situation.

“ Won’t you be seated ? I hope all our friends ” Mrs. Buckhurst, or as she was called, Mrs. Dean Falconer, made divers motions, with a very ugly chin, and stood as if she thought there ought to be an introduction. — The Dean knew it, but being ashamed to introduce her, determined against it. — Alfred stood politely in suspension, waiting their mutual pleasure.

“ Won’t you sit down, Sir ? ” repeated the Dean.

Down plumped Mrs. Falconer directly, and, taking out her spectacles, as if to shame her husband, by heightening the contrast of youth and age, deliberately put them on ; then, drawing her table nearer, settled herself to her work.

Alfred, who saw it to be necessary, determined to use his best address to conciliate the lady.

“ Mr. Dean, you have never yet done me the honor to introduce me to Mrs. Falconer.”

"I thought I thought we had met before since —— Mrs. Falconer —— Mr. Alfred Percy."

The lady took off her spectacles, smiled, and adjusted herself evidently with an intention to be more agreeable. Alfred sat down by her work-table, directed his conversation to her, and soon talked, or rather, induced her to talk herself into fine humor. Presently she retired to dress for dinner, and "hoped Mr. Alfred Percy had no intention of running away—she had a well-aired bed to offer him."——

The Dean, though he cordially hated his lady, was glad for his own sake, to be relieved from her fits of crossness; and was pleased by Alfred's paying attention to her, as this was a sort of respect to himself, and what he seldom met with, from those young men who had been his companions before his marriage. — They usually treated his lady with a neglect or ridicule, which reflected certainly upon her husband!

Alfred never yet had touched upon his business, and Buckhurst began to think this was merely a friendly visit. Upon Alfred's observing some alteration, which had been lately made in the room in which they were sitting, the Dean took him to see other improvements in the house; in pointing out these, and all the conveniencies and elegancies about the Parsonage, Buckhurst totally forgot the *dilapidation suit*; and every thing he showed and said tended unawares to prove, that the house was in the most perfect repair, and best condition possible. — Gradually, whatever solemnity, and beneficed pomp, there had at first appeared in the Dean's manner, wore off, or was laid aside; and, except his being somewhat more corpulent and rubicund than in early years, he appeared like the original Buckhurst. — His gayety of heart, indeed, was gone, but some sparkles of his former spirits remained.

“ Here,” said he, showing Alfred into his study. — “ Here, as our good friend,

Mr. *Blank* said when he showed us his study, ‘*Here is where I read all day long — quite snug — and nobody’s a bit the wiser for it.*’”——

The Dean seated himself in his comfortable arm chair.

“Try that chair, Alfred, excellent for sleeping in at one’s ease.

“To rest the cushion and soft Dean invite.”

“Ah!” said Alfred — “Often have I sat in this chair with my excellent friend Dean Leicester!”

The new Dean’s countenance suddenly changed — but endeavoring to pass it off with a jest, he said, “Ay, poor good old Leicester, he sleeps for ever — that’s one comfort — to me — if not to you.”—— But perceiving that Alfred continued to look serious. — The Dean added some more proper reflections in a tone of ecclesiastical sentiment, and with a sigh of decorum. — Then rose, for he smelt that the *dilapidation suit* was coming.

“Would not you like, Mr. Percy, to wash your hands before dinner?”

“I thank you, Mr. Dean, I must detain you a moment to speak to you on business.”

Black as Erebus grew the face of the Dean — he had no resource but to listen, for he knew it would come after dinner, if it did not come now; and it was as well to have it alone in the study, where nobody might be a bit the wiser.

When Alfred had stated the whole of what he had to say, which he did in as few, and strong words as possible, appealing to the justice and feelings of Buckhurst — to the fears, which the Dean must have of being exposed, and ultimately defeated in a court of justice —

“Mrs. Leicester,” — concluded he — “is determined to maintain the suit, and has employed me to carry it on for her.”

“I should very little have expected,” said the Dean, “that Mr. Alfred

Percy *would* have been employed in such a way against me.

"Still less should I have expected, that I could be called upon in such a way against you," — replied Alfred — "No one can feel it more than I do. The object of my present visit is, to try whether some accommodation may not be made, which will relieve us both from the necessity of going to law, and may prevent me from being driven to the performance of this most painful professional duty."

"Duty! professional duty!" repeated Buckhurst — "as if I did not understand all those *cloak-words*, and know how easy it is to put them on and off at pleasure!"

"To some it may be, but not to me," said Alfred, calmly.

Anger started into Buckhurst's countenance — but conscious how inefficient it would be, and how completely he had laid himself open — the Dean answered,

“ You are the best judge, Sir. — But I trust though I don't pretend to understand the honor of lawyers—I trust as a gentleman, you will not take advantage against me in this suit, of any thing my openness has shown you about the Parsonage.”

“ You trust rightly, Mr. Dean,” — replied Alfred in his turn, with a look not of anger, but of proud indignation —

“ You trust rightly, Mr. Dean, and as I should have expected, that one who has had opportunities of knowing me so well ought to trust.”

“ That's a clear answer,” said Buckhurst—“ But how could I tell?—so much *jockeying* goes on in every profession — how could I tell, that a lawyer would be more conscientious than another man? — But now you assure me of it — I take it upon your word, and believe it in your case. — About the accommodation — *accommodation* means money, does not it? — frankly, I have not a shilling. — But Mrs. Falconer is all *accommodation* — Try

what you can do with her — and by the way you began, I should hope you would do a great deal," — added he, laughing.

Alfred would not undertake to speak to his lady, unless the Dean would, in the first instance, make some sacrifice. — He represented, that he was not asking for money, but for a relinquishment of a claim, which he apprehended not to be justly due — "And the only use I shall ever make of what you have shown me here, is to press upon your feelings, as I do at this moment, the perception and conviction of the injustice of that claim, which I am persuaded your lawyers only instigated, and that you will abandon." —

Buckhurst begged him not to be persuaded of any such thing. The instigation of an attorney, or of a proctor, he laughing said, was not in law counted the instigation of the devil — at law no man talked of feelings. — In matters of property judges did not understand them,

whatever figure they might make with a jury in criminal cases — with an eloquent advocate's hand on his breast.

Alfred let Buckhurst go on with his vain wit and gay rhetoric, till he had nothing more to say, knowing that he was hiding consciousness of unhandsome conduct. — Sticking firmly to his point, Alfred showed that his client, though gentle, was resolved, and that, without Buckhurst yielded, law must take its course — that though he should never give any hint, the premises must be inspected, and disgrace and defeat must follow.

Forced to be serious, fretted and hurried, for the half hour bell before dinner had now rung, and the Dean's stomach began to know canonical hours, he exclaimed,

“ The upshot of the whole business is, that Mr. Alfred Percy is in love, I understand, with Miss Sophia Leicester, and this fifteen-hundred pounds, which he pushes me to the bare wall to relin-

quish, is eventually as part of her fortune to become his. — Would it not have been as fair to have stated this at once ?”

“ No—because it would not have been the truth.”

“ No! — You won’t deny that you are in love with Miss Leicester ?” —

“ I am as much in love, as man can be, with Miss Leicester, — but her fortune is nothing to me, for I shall never touch it.”

“ Never touch it — Does the aunt — the widow — the cunning widow, refuse consent ?”

“ Far from it, the aunt is all the aunt of Miss Leicester should be — all the widow of Dr. Leicester ought to be. — But her circumstances are not what they ought to be, and by the liberality of a friend, who lends me a house, rent free, and by the resources of my profession, I am able, better able than Mrs. Leicester is, to spare fifteen hundred pounds — therefore, in the recovery of this money I have no personal interest at

present. — I shall never receive it from her.”

“ Noble! Noble! — just what I could have done myself — once — what a contrast! ——”

Buckhurst laid his head down upon his arms flat on the table, and remained for some moments silent —— Then, starting upright,

“ I’ll never claim a penny from her —— I’ll give it all up to you! —— I will if I sell my band for it, by Jove.”

“ Oh! what has your father to answer for, who forced you into the church!” thought Alfred.

“ My dear Buckhurst,” said he, “ my dear Dean”

“ Call me Buckhurst, if you love me.”

“ I do love you, it is impossible to help it, in spite of ——”

“ All my faults — Say it out — Say it out —— in spite of your conscience,” added Buckhurst, trying to laugh :

“ Not in spite of my conscience, but in favor of yours,” said Alfred, against

whose bitter dictates you have been compelled all your life to act."

"I have so, but that's over. — What remains to be done at present? I am in real distress for five hundred pounds. Apropos to your being engaged in this dilapidation suit, you can speak to Mrs. Falconer about it. Tell her I have given up the thing: — And see what she will do."

Alfred promised he would speak to Mrs. Falconer. — "And, Alfred, when you see your sister Caroline, tell her that I am not in one sense such a wretch Quite as she thinks me. — But tell her that I am yet a greater wretch infinitely more miserable than she, I hope, can conceive — beyond redemption — beyond endurance miserable." — He turned away hastily in an agony of mind. Alfred shut the door and escaped, scarcely able to bear his own emotion.

When they met at dinner, Mrs. Dean Falconer was an altered person — her unseemly morning costume and well-worn

shawl being cast aside, she appeared in bloom-coloured gossamer ganze, and primrose ribbons, a would-be-young lady. Nothing of that curmudgeon look, or old fairy cast of face and figure, to which he had that morning been introduced, but in their place rouge, and smiles, and all the false brilliancy, which rouge can give to the eyes, proclaimed a determination to be charming.

The Dean was silent and scarcely eat any thing; though the dinner was excellent, for his lady was skilled in the culinary department, and in favor of Alfred had made a more hospitable display than she usually condescended to make for her husband's friends. There were no other guests, except a young lady, companion to Mrs. Falconer. Alfred was as agreeable and entertaining as circumstances permitted; and Mrs. Buckhurst Falconer, as soon as she got out of the dining-room, even before she reached the drawing-room, pronounced him to be a most polite and accomplished young

man, very different indeed from the *common run*, or the usual style of Mr. Dean Falconer's dashing bachelor beaux, who in her opinion were little better than brute bears.

At coffee, when the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, as Alfred was standing beside Mrs. Falconer, meditating how and when to speak of the object of his visit, she cleared the ground by choosing a topic of conversation, which at last fairly drove her husband out of the room. She judiciously, maliciously, or accidentally began to talk of the proposal, which she had heard a near relation of hers had not long since made to a near relation of Mr. Alfred Percy's—Mr. Clay, of Clay Hall, her nephew, had proposed for Mr. Alfred's sister, Miss Caroline Percy.——She was really sorry the match was not to take place, for she had heard a very high character of the young lady in every way, and her nephew was rich enough to do without fortune——Not but what that would be very

acceptable to all men — especially young men, who are now mostly all for money instead of all for love—— Except in the case of very first rate extraordinary beauty, which therefore making a woman a prey just as much one as the other, might be deemed a misfortune as great, though hardly *quite*, Mrs. Buckhurst said, as she had found a great fortune in her own particular case. The involution of meaning in these sentences rendering it not easy to be understood, the Dean stood it pretty well, only stirring his coffee, and observing that it was cold; but when his lady went on to a string of interrogatories about Miss Caroline Percy — on the colour of her eyes and hair — size of her mouth and nose — requiring in short a complete full length portrait of the young lady, poor Buckhurst set down his cup, and pleading business in his study, left the field open to Alfred.

“Near-sighted glasses! Do you never use them, Mr. Percy?” said Mrs. Dean Falconer, as she thought Alfred’s eyes

fixed upon her spectacles, which lay on the table.

“No! he never used them he thanked her, he was rather far-sighted than short-sighted.” She internally commended his politeness in not taking them up to verify her assertion, and put them into her pocket to avoid all future danger.

He saw it was a favorable moment, and entered at once into his business—beginning by observing, that the Dean was much out of spirits.—The moment money was touched upon, the curmudgeon look returned upon the lady, and for some time Alfred had great difficulty in making himself heard; she poured forth such complaints “against the extravagance of the Dean, with lists of the debts she had paid, the sums she had given, and the vow she had made never to go beyond the weekly allowance she had at the last settlement agreed to give her husband.”—

Alfred pleaded strongly the expense of law, and the certainty, in his opinion, of

ultimate defeat, with the being obliged to pay all the costs, which would fall upon the Dean. — The Dean was willing to withdraw his claim — he had promised to do so, in the most handsome manner, and therefore Alfred said, he felt particularly anxious, that he should not be distressed for five hundred pounds, a sum for which he knew Mr. Falconer was immediately pressed. — He appealed to Mrs. Falconer's generosity. — He had been desired by the Dean to speak to her on this subject, otherwise he should not have presumed — and it was as a professional man, and a near relation, that he now took the liberty: — This was the first transaction he had ever had with her, and he hoped he should leave the vicarage impressed with a sense of her generosity, and enabled to do her justice in the opinion of those, who did not know her.

“That was very little to her,” she bluntly said — “She acted only up to her own notions — She lived only for herself.”

“And for her husband. — Love,” Alfred Percy said, “he was assured was superior to money in her opinion. — And after all, my dear Madam, you set me the example of frankness, and permit me to speak to you without reserve. — What can you, who have no reason, you say, to be pleased with either of your nephews, do better with your money, than spend it while you live, and for yourself, in securing happiness in the gratitude and affection of a husband, who, generous himself, will be peculiarly touched and attached by generosity.”

The words, *Love, generosity, generous*, sounded upon the lady's ear, and she was unwilling to lose that high opinion, which she imagined Alfred entertained of her sentiments and character. Besides, she was conscious, that he was in fact nearer the truth, than all the world would have believed. Avaricious in trifles, and parsimonious in those every day habits, which brand the reputation immediately

with the fault of avarice, this woman was one of those misers, who can be generous by fits and starts, and who have been known to *give* hundreds of pounds, but never to part with a shilling.

She presented the Dean, her husband, with an order on her banker for the money he wanted, and Alfred had the pleasure of leaving his unhappy friend better, at least, than he found him. — He rejoiced in having compromised this business so successfully, and in thus having prevented the litigation, ill will, and disgraceful circumstances, which, without his interference, must have ensued.

The gratitude of Mrs. Leicester, and her niece, was delightful. — How much more gratifying this success, than any *professional* victory unmixed with feelings of benevolence and affection! — The aunt urged him to accept what he had been the means of saving, as part of her niece's fortune, but this he absolutely refused, and satisfied Mrs. Leicester's

delicacy, by explaining, that he could not, if he would, now yield to her entreaties, as he had actually obtained the money from poor Buckhurst's generous repentance, upon the express faith, that he had no private interest in the accommodation."

"You would not," said Alfred, "bring me under the act against raising money upon false pretences?"

What Alfred lost in money, he gained in love. — His Sophia's eyes beamed upon him with delight, and he enjoyed her smile,

"the dear reward of every virtuous toil."

— The day was fixed for their marriage, and at Alfred's suggestion, Mrs. Leicester consented, painful as it was, in some respects, to her feelings, that they should be married by Dean Falconer, in the parish church. — Alfred knew, that his parishioners had been violently prejudiced against the present Dean by the re-

port, that he was going to law with the late Dean's family ; and Mrs. Leicester's appearing at his church, and permitting her niece to be married by him, would be the most public and effectual method of putting an end to these reports, and of conciliating for him the good will of his parishioners. Mrs. Leicester consented with the more readiness to what at first was repugnant to her feelings, upon reflecting, that acting in this manner would be exactly consonant to the whole tenor and principles of her beloved husband's conduct through life, who had ever been ready to sacrifice, not only any personal pique, but every refinement of sentiment, to his great Christian duty of promoting peace and good will amongst men.

Alfred brought his bride to town, and as soon as they were established in their own house, or rather in that house which Mr. Gresham insisted upon their calling their own, Lady Jane Granville was the first person to offer her congratulations—

congratulations very different from those unmeaning compliments, which, in the fashionable world, her Ladyship had so often heard upon similar occasions. — Alfred begged his sister Caroline from Lady Jane, as he had already obtained his father's and mother's consent. Lady Jane was really fond of Caroline's company, and had forgiven her, as well as she could; yet her Ladyship had no longer a hope of being *of use* to her, and felt that even if any other offer were to occur, and — none such as had been made — could ever more be expected — it would lead only to fresh disappointment and altercation; therefore she, with the less reluctance, relinquished Caroline altogether. —

Caroline's new sister had been, from the time they were first acquainted, her chosen friend, and she rejoiced in seeing all her hopes for her brother's happiness accomplished by this marriage. He had long looked forward to this time, when he could have the comforts of a home;

and the pleasures of domestic society, to solace him in the midst of his professional labors. His Sophia was peculiarly calculated to make his home agreeable: She had those habits of independent occupation, which are essential to the wife of a professional man, who must have many hours to spend alone, or to pass at least without the company of her husband. — She had also that cheerfulness of temper, readiness to converse, or to be silent, which are *necessary* to a man, whose mind is alternately engrossed with serious business, and in want of relaxation after tiresome exertion. — On his return home every evening, he was sure to find a smiling wife, a sympathizing friend, a cheerful fireside, as delightful to the intellectual as to the corporeal laborer. — Sophia had musical talents, her husband was fond of music. — She did not lay aside the accomplishments, which had charmed the lover, but made use of them to please and attach him she had chosen as her companion for life. — Her voice, her harp,

her utmost skill, were ready at any moment for her husband; and she found far more delight in devoting her talents to him, than she had ever felt in exhibiting them to admiring, perhaps, but certainly indifferent auditors. — This was the domestic use of accomplishments, which Caroline loved, to which she had always been accustomed, and in joining in her new sister's occupations, and endeavors to make Alfred's evenings pass pleasantly, she felt at once as much *at home*, as if she had been in the country — for the mind is its own place, and domestic happiness may be naturalized in a capital city. —

At her brother's house, Caroline had an opportunity of seeing a society that was new to her, that of the professional men of the first eminence, both in law and medicine, the men of science, and of literature, with whom Alfred and Erasmus had been for years assiduously cultivating acquaintance. They were now happy to meet at Alfred's house, for they liked

and esteemed him, and they found his wife and sister sensible, well informed women, to whom their conversation was of real amusement and instruction; and who, in return, knew how to make them feel at ease in their society, and to enliven their leisure hours by the happy mixture of female sprightliness and elegance. Caroline now saw the literary and scientific world to the best advantage. Not the amateurs, or the mere *show* people, but those who, really excelling and feeling their own superiority, had too much pride, and too little time to waste upon idle flattery, or what to them were stupid, uninteresting *parties*. Those who refused to go to Lady Spilsbury's, or to Lady Angelica Headingham's, or who were seen there, perhaps, once or twice in a season as a great favor and honor, would call three or four evenings every week at Alfred's, and spend there as much time as their business would permit.

Thus Caroline found herself placed at

once *au courant du jour*, as to every thing literary and scientific, by means of her two brothers and their friends. — The first news, the first hints of discoveries, inventions, and literary projects, she heard from time to time discussed. Those men of talents, who she had heard were to be seen at *conversazioni*, or of whom she had had a glimpse in fine society, now appeared in a new point of view, and to the best advantage; without those pretensions and rivalships, with which they sometimes are afflicted in public; or those affectations and singularities, which they often are supposed to assume, to obtain notoriety among persons inferior to them in intellect, and superior in fashion. — Instead of playing, as they sometimes did, a false game to amuse the multitude, they were obliged now to exert their real skill, and play fair with one another.

Sir James Harrington tells us, that in his days the courtiers, who played at divers games in public, had a way of

exciting the admiration and amazement of the commoner sort of spectators, by producing heaps of golden counters, and seeming to stake immense sums, when all the time they had previously agreed among one another, that each guinea should stand for a shilling, or each hundred guineas for one. So that in fact, two modes of calculation were used for the initiated and uninitiated, and this esoteric and exoteric practice goes on continually to this hour, among literary performers in the intellectual, as well as among courtiers in the fashionable world. —

All this, from the conversation which she now heard behind the scenes, Caroline had an opportunity of seeing, and she was much edified and amused; beside, the pleasure of studying celebrated characters, and persons of eminent merit, at their ease and at her own, Caroline had now opportunities of seeing most of those objects of rational curiosity, which with Lady Jane Granville had

been prohibited, as — *mauvais ton*. With men of sense she found it was not *mauvais ton*, to use her eyes for the purposes of instruction or entertainment.

When her brothers were too much engaged to go with her anywhere she wished, some of their friends were generally ready to attend her. With Mrs. Alfred Percy she saw every thing in the best manner, in the company of well informed guides, who were able to point out what was essential to be observed; ready to explain, and to illustrate, to procure for them all those privileges and advantages as spectators, which common gazers are denied, but which liberal and enlightened men are ever not only ready to allow, but eager to procure for intelligent unassuming females.

Among the gentlemen of learning, talents, and eminence in Alfred's own profession, whom Caroline had the honor of seeing at her brother's, were Mr. Friend, the *friend* of his early years at the bar; and that great luminary, who

in a higher orbit had cheered and guided him in his ascent.—— It was heartfelt pleasure to Caroline, to see the manner in which her brother was considered and treated by his inferiors, equals, and superiors in his profession——for each, in his different way, gave testimony to Alfred's talents, candor, or generosity. It was peculiarly gratifying to see him distinguished, not only by the approbation, but something more, by the regard of such a man as the Lord Chief Justice. It was impossible for a woman like Caroline, not to be struck with his superiority of intellect, good breeding, and character; and equally impossible that her merit, even had it not been recommended by so much beauty, should escape his penetration and benevolence. He saw the genuine affection she bore her brother, and was pleased to gratify her by the praises of Alfred. The Chief Justice was in a station, and of an age, where praise can be conferred without impropriety, and without hurting the

feelings of delicacy or pride. — He knew how to praise — a difficult art, but he excelled in it. — As Caroline once, in speaking of him, said,

“ Common compliments, compared to praise from him, are as common coin, compared to a medal struck and appropriated for the occasion.”

About this time Mr. Temple came to tell his friends, that a ship was actually ordered to be in readiness to carry him on his intended embassy; that Mr. Shaw had recovered; that Cunningham Falconer had no more excuses or pretences for delay; despatches, the last Lord Oldborough said he should ever receive from him as envoy, had now arrived, and Temple was to set out immediately. — So far for his own business; when he had finished this, he took Alfred aside, and told him, that with the despatches from Germany, Lord Oldborough had received a letter from Count Altenberg, giving an account of alarming revolutionary symptoms, which had appeared

in the capital, and in the provinces, in the dominions of his sovereign—— Lord Oldborough had shown Mr. Temple what related to public affairs, but had not put the whole letter into his hands. —— All that Mr. Temple could judge from what he read was, that the Count's mind was most seriously occupied with the dangerous state of public affairs in his country — “ I should have thought,” added Mr. Temple, “ that the whole of this communication was entirely of a political nature, but that in the last page, which Lord Oldborough put into my hand, the catch words at the bottom were *Countess Christina*.”

Alfred observed, “ that without the aid of Rosamond's imagination to supply something more, nothing could be made of this. — However, it was a satisfaction to have had direct news of Count Altenberg.”

The next day Mr. Temple came for Alfred. —— Lord Oldborough desired to see him. —

“ Whatever his business may be, I am sure it is important and interesting,” said Mr. Temple; “ by this time I ought to be well acquainted with Lord Oldborough, I know the signs of his suppressed emotion, and I have seldom seen him put such force upon himself, to appear calm, and to do the business of the day, before he should yield his mind to what pressed on his secret thoughts — In my opinion you will now hear more, and all that can be heard, about Count Altenberg.” —

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LORD OLDBOROUGH was engaged with some gentlemen from the city about a loan when Alfred arrived. His Lordship's attention was given entirely to this business. By the length of time which the negotiators staid, they tried Alfred's patience, but the minister sat with immovable composure, till they knew their own minds, and till they departed.—Then, the loan at once dismissed from his thoughts, he was ready for Alfred——

“ You have married, I think, Mr. Alfred Percy, since I saw you last — I congratulate you.”

His Lordship was not in the habit of noticing such common events; Alfred was surprised and obliged by the interest in his private affairs, which this congratulation denoted.

"I congratulate you, Sir, because I understand you have married a woman of sense. To marry a fool—to form—or to have any connexion with a fool," continued his Lordship, his countenance changing remarkably as he spoke—"I conceive to be the greatest evil, the greatest curse, that can be inflicted on a man of sense."

He walked across the room with long, firm, indignant strides—then stopping short, he exclaimed,

"*Lettres de cachet*!——Dangerous instruments in bad hands! . . . As what are not?——But one good purpose they answered—They put it in the power of the head of every noble house to disown, and to deprive of the liberty to disgrace his family, any member, who should manifest the will to commit desperate crime, or desperate folly."

Alfred was by no means disposed to join in praise even of this use of a *lettre de cachet*, but he did not think it a proper time to argue the point; as he saw

Lord Oldborough was under the influence of some strong passion. Alfred waited in silence, till he should explain himself further.

His Lordship unlocked a desk, and produced a letter.

"Pray, Mr. Percy . . . Mr. Alfred Percy, have you heard any thing lately of the Marchioness of Twickenham?"

"No, my lord—"

Alfred, at this instant, recollected the whisper which he had once heard at chapel, and he added—"Not of late, my lord."

"There," said Lord Oldborough, putting a letter into Alfred's hands—"There is the sum of what I have heard."

The letter was from the Duke of Greenwich, informing Lord Oldborough, that an unfortunate discovery had been made of *an affair* between the Marchioness of Twickenham and a certain Captain Bellamy, which rendered an immediate separation necessary.

“So!” thought Alfred, “my brother Godfrey had a fine escape of this fair lady.”

“I have seen her once since I received that letter, and I never will see her agtin,” said Lord Oldborough — “that’s past — all that concerns her is past and irremediable — Now as to the future, and to what concerns myself. I have been informed — how truly I cannot say — that some time ago a rumour, a suspicion of this intrigue, was whispered in what they call the fashionable world.”

“I believe that your Lordship has been truly informed,” said Alfred — And he then mentioned the whisper he had heard at the chapel.

“Ha! — Further, it has been asserted to me, that a hint was given to the Marquis of Twickenham, of the danger of suffering that . . . what is the man’s name — Bel-lamy — to be so near his wife — And that the hint was disregarded.”

“The Marquis did, very weakly, or very wickedly,” said Alfred.

"All wickedness is weakness, Sir, you know —— but to our point —— I have been assured, that the actual discovery of the intrigue was made to the Marquis some months previous to the birth of his child —— And that he forbore to take any notice of this, lest it might affect the legitimacy of that child. After the birth of the infant —— a boy —— subsequent indiscretions on the part of the Marchioness, the Marquis would make it appear, gave rise to his first suspicions. —— Now, Sir, these are the points, of which, as my friend, and as a professional man, I desire you to ascertain the truth. If the facts are as I have thus heard, I presume no divorce can be legally obtained."

"Certainly not, my Lord."

"Then I will direct you instantly to the proper channels for information."

Whilst Lord Oldborough wrote directions, Alfred assured him he would fulfil his commission with all the discretion and celerity in his power.

“The next step,” continued Lord Oldborough — “for, on such a subject, I wish to say all that is necessary at once, that it may be banished from my mind — Your next step, supposing the facts to be ascertained, is to go with this letter — my answer to the Duke of Greenwich — See him — and see the Marquis. In matters of consequence have nothing to do with secondary people — deal with the principals. — Show in the first place, as a lawyer, that their divorce is unattainable — Next, show the Marquis, that he destroys his son and heir by attempting it. — The Duke, I believe, would be glad of a pretext for dissolving the political connection between me and the Greenwich family. He fears me, and he fears the world; he dares not abandon me without a pretence for the dissolution of friendship. He is a weak man, and never dares to act without a pretext; but show him that a divorce is not necessary for his purpose — a separation will do as well — For instance, I

am ready to break with him at council, in the House of Lords; on a hundred political points; and let him shield himself as he may from the reproach of desertion, by leaving the blame of quarrel on my impracticability, or on what he will, I care not — so that my family be saved from the ignominy of divorce."

As he sealed his letter, Lord Oldborough went on in abrupt sentences.

"I never counted on a weak man's friendship — I can do without his Grace — Woman! Woman! The same — ever since the beginning of the world!"

Then turning to Alfred to deliver the letter into his hand,

"Your brother, Major Percy, Sir . . . I think I recollect . . . He was better in the West Indies."

"I was just thinking so, my Lord," said Alfred.

"Yes — Better encounter the plague than a fool."

Lord Oldborough had never, before, distinctly adverted to his knowledge of

his niece's partiality for Godfrey, but his Lordship now added,

“Major Percy's honorable conduct is not unknown; I trust honorable conduct never was, and never will be, lost upon me. — This to the Duke of Greenwich . . . and this to the Marquis — Since it was to be, I rejoice that . . . this Captain Bellamy is the gallant — Had it been your brother, Sir, could there have been any love in the case . . . not, observe, that I believe in love, much less am I subject to the weakness of remorse — but a twinge might have seized my mind — I might possibly have been told, that the Marchioness was married against her inclination — But I am at ease on that point — My judgment of her was right. — You will let me know, in one word, the result of your negotiation without entering into particulars — Divorce, or no divorce, is all I wish to hear.

Alfred did not know all the circumstances of the Marchioness of Twicken-

ham's marriage, nor the peremptory manner in which it had been insisted upon by her uncle, otherwise he would have felt still greater surprise, than that which he now felt, at the stern unbending character of the man.—Possessed as Lord Oldborough was by the opinion, that he had at the time judged and acted in the best manner possible, no after events could make him doubt the justice of his own decision, or could at all shake him in his own estimation.

Alfred soon brought his report,
 "In one word,—no divorce, my Lord."

"That's well—I thank you, Sir."

His Lordship made no further inquiries—not even whether there was to be a separation.

Alfred was commissioned by the Duke of Greenwich to deliver a message, which, like the messages of the Gods in Homer, he delivered verbatim, and without comment.

"His Grace of Greenwich trusts Lord

Oldborough will believe, that notwithstanding the unfortunate circumstances, which dissolved in some degree the family connexion, it was the farthest possible from his Grace's wish or thoughts, to break with Lord Oldborough, as long as private feelings, and public principles, could be rendered by any means compatible."——

Lord Oldborough smiled in scorn, and Alfred could scarcely command his countenance.——

Lord Oldborough prepared to give his Grace the opportunity, which he knew he desired, of differing with him on principle: his Lordship thought his favor and power were now sufficiently established, to be able to do without the Duke of Greenwich, and his pride prompted him to show this to his Grace, and to the world. He carried it with a high hand for a short time, but even whilst he felt most secure, and when all seemed to bend and bow before his genius and his sway, many circumstances and many persons

were combining to work the downfall of his power.

One of the first slight circumstances, which shook his *favor*, was a speech he had made to some gentleman about the presentation of the Deanery to Buckhurst Falconer. It had been supposed by many, who knew the court which Commissioner Falconer paid to Lord Oldborough, that it was through his Lordship's interest, that this preferment was given to the son; but when some person taking this for granted, spoke of it to his Lordship, he indignantly disclaimed all part in the transaction, and it is said, that he added, " Sir, I know what is due to private regard as a man — and as a minister, what must be yielded to parliamentary influence; but I never could have advised the bestowing ecclesiastical benefice and dignity upon any one, whose conduct was not his first recommendation."

This speech, made in a moment of proud and perhaps unguarded indigna-

tion, was repeated with additions, suppressions, variations, and comments. — Any thing will at court serve the purpose of those who wish to injure, and it is inconceivable what mischief was done to the minister by this slight circumstance — In the first place, the nobleman high in office, and the family connexions of the nobleman who had made the exchange of livings, and given the promise of the Deanery to Bishop Clay, were offended beyond redemption, — because, they were in the wrong. — Then, all who had done, or wished to do wrong in similar instances, were displeased by reflection or by anticipation — But chiefly Lord Oldborough was injured by misrepresentation in the quarter, where it was of most consequence to him to preserve his influence. It was construed by the highest authority into disrespect, and an imperious desire to encroach on favor, to control prerogative, and to subdue the mind of his sovereign. Intidious arts had long been secretly employed to infuse these

ideas; and when once the jealousy of power was excited, every trifle confirmed the suspicion, which Lord Oldborough's uncourtierlike character was little calculated to dispel. His popularity now gave umbrage, and it was hinted, that he wished to make himself the *independent* minister of the people.

The affairs of the country prospered, however, under his administration; there was trouble, there was hazard in change. It was argued, that it was best to wait at least for some reverse of fortune in war, or some symptom of domestic discontent, before an attempt should be made to displace this minister, formidable by his talents, and by the awe his commanding character inspired.

The habit of confidence and deference for his genius and integrity remained, and to him no difference for some time appeared, in consequence of the secret decay of favor.

Commissioner Falconer, timid, anxious, restless, was disposed by circumstances

and by nature, or by second nature, to the vigilance of a dependant's life; accustomed to watch and consult daily the barometer of court favors, he soon felt the coming storm; and the moment he saw prognostics of the change, he trembled, and considered how he should best provide for his own safety before the hour of danger arrived.—Numerous libels against the minister appeared, which Lord Oldborough never read, but the Commissioner, with his best spectacles, read them all. For he well knew and believed what the sage Selden saith, that,

“ Though some make slight of libels, yet you may see by them how the wind sets.”

After determining by the throwing up of these straws which way the wind set, the Commissioner began with all possible skill and dexterity to trim his boat. But dexterous trimmer though he was, and “ prescient of change,” he did not yet foresee from what quarter the storm would come.

While the Commissioner was foreseeing and preparing for the downfall of his patron, Lord Oldborough was silently collecting proofs of the duplicity of Cunningham Falconer, of the intrigues he had been carrying on abroad, and at home, to have himself appointed ambassador to Denmark by the Greenwich influence, in case of a change of ministry, or at all events, in despite of Lord Oldborough, by whom he had been recalled. — Count Altenberg's letters had unveiled completely the Envoy's treachery as far as it related to his intrigues abroad, and other friends detected some of his manoeuvres with politicians at home, to whom he had endeavored to pay court, by betraying confidence reposed in him respecting the Tourville papers. Much of the mischief Cunningham had done this great minister still operated, unknown to his unsuspecting mind : but sufficient was revealed, to determine Lord Oldborough to dismiss him from all future hopes of his favor ; and, as it was his Lord-

ship's custom when he felt contempt, to discard Cunningham for ever from his thoughts.

“ Mr. Commissioner Falconer,” he began one morning, the moment the Commissioner entered his cabinet, “ Mr. Commissioner Falconer,” in a tone which instantly dispelled the smile at entrance from the Commissioner's countenance, and in the same moment changed his whole configuration,

“ My confidence is withdrawn from your son, Mr. Cunningham Falconer—for ever—and not without good reason—As you may . . . if you are not aware of it already . . . see, by those papers.”——

Lord Oldborough turned away, and asked his secretaries for his red box—as he was going to Council——

Just as he left his cabinet, he looked back, and said:

“ Mr. Falconer, you should know, if you be not already apprised of it, that your son, Cunningham, is on his road to Denmark—You should be aware, that

'the journey is not made by my desire, or by his Majesty's order, or by any official authority — consequently, he is travelling to the court of Denmark at his own expense or yours — Unless he can prevail upon his Grace of Greenwich to defray his ambassadorial travelling charges, or can afford to wait for them till a total change of administration — Of which, Sir, if I see any symptoms to day in council," added his Lordship, in the tone of bitter irony, "I will give you fair notice — for fair dealing is what I practise."

This said, the Minister left the Commissioner to digest his speech as he might, and repaired to Council, where he found every thing apparently as smooth as usual, and where he was received by all, especially by the highest, with perfect consideration.

Meantime Commissioner Falconer was wretched beyond expression, wretched in the certainty that his son, that he himself, had probably lost, irrecoverably,

one excellent patron, before they had secured, even in case of change, another — This premature discovery of Cunningham's intrigues totally disconcerted and overwhelmed him; and, in the bitterness of his heart, he cursed the duplicity, which he had taught and encouraged still more by example than by precept. But Cunningham's duplicity had more and closer folds than his own — Cunningham, conceited of his diplomatic genius, and fearful of the cautious timidity of his father, did not trust that father with the knowledge of all he did, or half of what he intended; so that the Commissioner, who had thought himself at the bottom of every thing, now found that he, too, had been cheated by his son with false confidences, and was involved by him in the consequences of a scheme, of which he had never been the adviser. The Commissioner would never have advised the setting out on a journey to the court of Denmark at his private expense, on the faith of promises,

on the hope of a change of ministry, on the private assurance that he should be accredited, and that his services should be rewarded by the new administration. Commissioner Falconer knew too well, by the experience of Cumberland and others, the fate of those, who suffer themselves to be lured on by second-hand promises ; and who venture, without being publicly acknowledged by their employers, to undertake any diplomatic mission. Nor would Cunningham, whose natural disposition to distrust was greater than his father's, have sold himself to any political tempter without first signing and sealing the compact, had he been in possession of his cool judgment, and had he been in any other than the desperate circumstances in which he was placed. He was at once incensed and terrified by Lord Oldborough's unexpected recal — After having delayed, by every imaginable pretence, to obey, till his Lordship's orders were repeated in that peremptory tone, which left him no

further possibility of evasion, he dreaded to appear before the haughty irritated minister; and, perhaps, his secret conscience whispered, that his recal might be in consequence of the detection of some of his intrigues. In this dilemma, deceived also by promises from the Greenwich party, and by the news from home, that the immediate dismissal or resignation of Lord Oldborough was expected; Cunningham had ventured upon this bold stroke for an embassy.

On Lord Oldborough's return from Council, the Commissioner finding, from his secret informants, that every thing had gone on smoothly; and being overawed by the confident security of the minister, began to doubt his former belief, and in spite of all the symptoms of change, was now inclined to think, that none would take place — The sorrow and contrition with which he next appeared before Lord Oldborough were, therefore, truly sincere; and when he found himself alone once more with his Lordship,

earnest was the vehemence with which he disclaimed his unworthy son, and disavowed all knowledge of the transaction.

“ If I had seen cause to believe, that you had any part in this transaction, Sir, you would not be here at this moment — Therefore, your protestations are superfluous — None would be accepted if any were necessary.”

The very circumstance of the son's not having trusted the father completely saved the Commissioner, for this time, from utter ruin — He took breath — and presently — Oh, weak man! doomed never to know how to deal with a strong character — fancying that his intercession might avail for his son, and that the pride of Lord Oldborough might be appeased, and might be suddenly wrought to forgiveness, by that tone and posture of submission and supplication used only by the subject to offended Majesty, he actually threw himself at the feet of the minister.

“My gracious Lord!—a pardon for my son.”

“I beseech you, Sir!”—cried Lord Oldborough—endeavoring to stop him from kneeling—The Commissioner sunk instantly on his knee.

“Never will the unhappy father rise till his son be restored to your favor, my Lord.”

“Sir,” said Lord Oldborough—“I have no favor for those who have no sense of honor—Rise, Mr. Falconer, and let not the father degrade himself for the son—*unavailingly*.”

The accent and look were decisive, the Commissioner rose. Instead of being gratified, his patron, seemed shocked, if not disgusted; far from being propitiated by this sacrifice of dignity, it rendered him still more averse; and no consolatory omen appearing, the Commissioner withdrew in silence, repenting that he had abased himself. — After this some days and nights passed with the Commissioner in all the horrors of indecision

—could the minister weather the storm or not?—should Mr. Falconer endeavor to reinstate himself with Lord Oldborough, or secure in time favor with the Duke of Greenwich?—Mrs. Falconer, to whom her husband's groans in the middle of the night at last betrayed the sufferings of his mind, drew from him the secret of his fears and meditations. She advised strongly the going over, decidedly, and in time, but secretly, to the Greenwich faction.

The Commissioner knew, that this could not be done *secretly*. The attention of the minister was now awake to all his motions, and the smallest movement towards his Grace of Greenwich must be observed and understood—On the other hand, to abide by a falling minister was folly, especially when he had positively withdrawn his favor from Cunningham, who had the most to expect from his patronage. Between these opposite difficulties, notwithstanding the urgent excitations of Mrs. Falconer,

the poor Commissioner could not bring himself to decide, till the time for action was past.

Another blow came upon him, for which he was wholly unprepared—There arrived from abroad accounts—of the failure of a secret expedition; and the General, in his despatches, named Colonel John Falconer as the officer, to whose neglect of orders he principally attributed the disappointment. — It appeared, that orders had been sent to have his regiment at a certain place at a given hour. At the moment these orders came, Colonel John Falconer was out on a shooting party. The troops, of course, on which the General had relied, did not arrive in time, and all his other combinations failed from this neglect of discipline, and disobedience of orders. Colonel Falconer was sent home to be tried by a Court Martial.

“ I pity you, Sir”—said Lord Oldborough, as Commissioner Falconer, white as ashes, read in his presence,

these despatches—"I pity you, Sir, from my soul—Here is no fault of yours—The fault is mine."

It was one of the few faults of this nature, which Lord Oldborough had ever committed. Except in the instance of the Falconer family, none could name any, whom his Lordship had placed in situations, for which they were inadequate or unfit. Of this single error he had not foreseen the consequences; they were more important, more injurious to him, and to the public, than he could have calculated or conceived.—It appeared now as if the Falconer family were doomed to be his ruin. That the public knew, in general, that John Falconer had been promoted by ministerial favor, Lord Oldborough was aware; but he imagined, that the peculiar circumstances of that affair were known only to himself, and to Commissioner Falconer's family. To his astonishment he found, at this critical moment, that the whole transaction had reached the ear

of Majesty, and that it was soon publicly known. The Commissioner, with protestations and oaths, declared that the secret had never, by his means, transpired. It had been divulged by the baseness of his son Cunningham, who betrayed it to the Greenwich faction. They, skilled in all the arts of undermining a rival, employed the means that were thus put into their power with great diligence and effect.

It was observed at levee, that the Sovereign looked coldly upon the minister — Every courtier whispered, that Lord Oldborough had been certainly much to blame — Disdainful of their opinions, Lord Oldborough was sensibly affected by the altered eye of his Sovereign.

“What! After all my services! — At the first change of fortune!”

This sentiment swelled in his breast, but his countenance was rigidly calm, his demeanor towards the courtiers and towards his colleagues more than usually firm, if not haughty.

After the levee he demanded a private audience.

Alone with the King, the habitual influence of this great minister's superior genius operated. The cold manner was changed, or, rather, it was changed involuntarily. From one "not used to the language of apology," the frank avowal of a fault must have a striking effect. Lord Oldborough took upon himself the whole blame of the disaster that had ensued, in consequence of his error, an error frequent in other ministers, uncommon in him, almost unprecedented.

He was answered with a smile of royal raillery, that the peculiar family circumstances, which had determined his Lordship so rapidly to promote that officer, must, to all fathers of families and heads of houses, if not to statesmen and generals, be a sufficient and home apology.

Considering the peculiar talent which his sovereign possessed, and in which he gloried, that of knowing the connexions

and domestic affairs, not only of the nobility near his person, but of private individuals remote from his court, Lord Oldborough had little cause to be surprised, that this secret transaction should be known to his Majesty. — Something of this his Lordship, with all due respect, hinted in reply. At the termination of this audience, he was soothed by the condescending assurance, that whilst the circumstances of the late unfortunate reverse naturally created regret and mortification, no dissatisfaction with his ministerial conduct mixed with these feelings. On the contrary, he was assured, that fear of the effect a disappointment might have on the mind of the public, in diminishing confidence in his Lordship's efforts for the good of the country, was the sentiment which had lowered the spirits, and clouded the brow of Majesty.

His Lordship returned thanks for the gracious demonstration of these sentiments — and, bowing respectfully, with-

drew. — In the faces and behaviour of the courtiers, as in a glass, he saw reflected the truth. They all pretended to be in the utmost consternation ; and he heard of nothing but “ apprehensions for the effect on the public mind,” and “ fears for his Lordship’s popularity.”

— His secretary, Mr. Temple, heard, indeed, more of this than could reach his Lordship’s ear directly ; for, even now, when they thought they foresaw his fall, few had sufficient courage to hazard the tone of condolence with Lord Oldborough, or to expose the face of hypoerisy to the severity of his penetrating eye. In secret every means had been taken to propagate in the city the knowledge of all the circumstances that were unfavorable to the minister, and to increase the dissatisfaction which any check in the success of our armies naturally produces. The tide of popularity, which had hitherto supported the minister, suddenly ebbed, and he fell, in public opinion, with astonishing rapidity.

For the moment all was forgotten, but that he was the person who had promoted John Falconer to be a Colonel, against whom the cry of the populace was raised with all the clamor of national indignation. The Greenwich faction knew how to take advantage of this disposition. — It happened to be some festival, some holiday, when the common people, having nothing to do, are more disposed than at any other time, to intoxication and disorder. — The emissaries of designing partisans mixed with the populace, and a mob gathered round the minister's carriage, as he was returning late from the House of Lords. The same carriage, and the same man, whom, but a few short weeks before, this populace had drawn with loud huzzas, and almost with tears of affection. Unmoved of mind, as he had been, when he heard their huzzas, Lord Oldborough now listened to their execrations, till from abuse they began to proceed to outrage, — Stones were thrown at his car-

riage. One of his servants narrowly escaped being struck. — Lord Oldborough was alone — he threw open his carriage-door, and sprang out on the step.

“Whose life is it you seek?” cried he, in a voice which obtained instant silence. — “Lord Oldborough’s? — Lord Oldborough stands before you. — Take his life who dares — a life spent in your service. — Strike! — But strike openly. — You are Englishmen, not assassins.”

Then, turning to his servants, he added, in a calm voice,

“Home—slowly. — Not a man here will touch you. Keep your master in sight. — If I fall, mark by what hand.” —

Then stepping down into the midst of the people, he crossed the street to the flagged pathway, the crowd opening to make way for him. He walked on with a deliberate firm step. The mob moving along with him, sometimes huzzaing, sometimes uttering horrid execrations in horrid tones. — Lord Oldborough, pre-

serving absolute silence, still walked on, never turned his head or quickened his pace till he reached his own house. — Then, facing the mob, as he stood waiting till the door should be opened, the people, struck with his intrepidity, with one accord joined in a shout of applause. — The next instant, and before the door was opened, they cried,

“ Hat off! — Hat off! ”

Lord Oldborough's hat never stirred. — A man took up a stone.

“ Mark that man ! ” — cried Lord Oldborough.

The door opened. — “ Return to your homes, my countrymen, and bless God that you have not, any of you, murder to answer for this night.”

Then entering his house, he took off his hat, and gave it to one of his attendants. — His secretary, Temple, had run down stairs to meet him, inquiring what was the cause of the disturbance.

“ Only,” said Lord Oldborough, “ that

I have served the people, but never bent to them."

"Curse them! they are not worth serving.—Oh! I thought they'd have taken my Lord's life that minute," cried his faithful servant Rodney.—"The sight left my eyes.—I thought he was gone for ever.—Thank God! he's safe.—Take off my Lord's coat.—I can't—for the soul of me.—Curse those ungrateful people!"

"Do not curse them, my good Rodney," said Lord Oldborough, smiling.—"Poor people, they are not ungrateful, only mistaken. Those who mislead them are to blame.—The English are a fine people.—Even an English mob, you see, is generous, and just, as far as it knows."

Lord Oldborough was sound asleep this night, before any other individual in the house had finished talking of the dangers he had escaped,

The civil and military courage shown by the minister in the sudden attack

upon his character and person were such, as to raise him again at once to his former height in public esteem. His enemies were obliged to affect admiration. The Greenwich party, foiled in this attempt, now disavowed it. — News of a victory effaced the memory of the late disappointment. — Stocks rose — addresses for a change of ministry were quashed — addresses of thanks and congratulation poured in. — Lord Oldborough gave them to Mr. Temple to answer, and kept the strength of his attention fixed upon the great objects which were essential to the nation, and the sovereign he served.

Mr. Falconer saw that the storm had blown over, the darkness was past, Lord Oldborough, firm and superior, stood bright in power, and before him the Commissioner bent more obsequious, more anxious than ever, — Anxious he might well be, unhappy father! the life, perhaps, of one of his sons, his honor certainly at stake, the fortune of an

other, his existence ruined! — And what hopes of propitiating him, who had so suffered by the favor he had already shown — who had been betrayed by one of the family — and disgraced by another.

— The Commissioner's only hope was in the recollection of the words,

“ I pity you from my soul, Sir,” — which burst from Lord Oldborough, even at the moment when he had most reason to be enraged against Colonel Falconer. *Following up* this idea, and working on the generous compassion, of which but for this indication he would not have supposed the stern Lord Oldborough to be susceptible, the Commissioner appeared before him every day the image of a broken-hearted father. — In silence Lord Oldborough from time to time looked at him, and by these looks, more than by all the promises of all the great men who had ever spoken to him, Mr. Falconer was reassured; and, as he told Mrs. Falconer, who, at this time, was in dreadful anxiety, he felt certain, that

Lord Oldborough would not punish him for the faults of his sons — he was satisfied, that his place and his pension would not be taken from him, and that, at least in fortune, they should not be utterly ruined. — In this security the Commissioner showed rather more than his customary degree of strength of mind, and more knowledge of Lord Oldborough's character, than he had upon most other occasions evinced.

Things were in this state, when, one morning, after Lord Oldborough had given orders, that no one should be admitted, as he was dictating some public papers of consequence to Mr. Temple, the Duke of Greenwich was announced. His Grace sent in a note to signify, that he waited upon Lord Oldborough by order of his Majesty; and that, if this hour were not convenient, he begged to have the hour named, at which his Grace could be admitted. — His Grace was admitted instantly. — Mr. Temple retired — for it was evident — this was to be a se-

cret conference. — His Grace of Greenwich entered with the most important solemnity — infinitely more ceremonious than usual, he was at last seated, and, after heavy and audible sighs, still hesitated to open his business. Through the affected gloom and dejection of his countenance Lord Oldborough saw a malicious pleasure lurking, whilst, in a studied exordium, he spoke of the infinite reluctance, with which he had been compelled, by his Majesty's express orders, to wait upon his Lordship on a business the most painful to his feelings. As being a public colleague — as a near and dear connexion — as a friend in long habits of intimacy with his Lordship, he had prayed his Majesty to be excused. — But it was His Majesty's pleasure — He had only now to beg his Lordship to believe, that it was with infinite concern, &c. — Lord Oldborough, though suffering under this circumlocution, never condescended to show any symptom of impatience; but allowing his Grace to

run the changes on the words and forms of apology, when these were exhausted, his Lordship simply said, that "his Majesty's pleasure of course precluded all possibility of hesitation, and all necessity for apology." —

His Grace was vexed to find Lord Oldborough still unmoved, he was sure this tranquillity could not long endure — he continued —

"A sad business, my Lord — A terrible discovery . . . I really can hardly bring myself to speak. . . ."

Lord Oldborough gave his Grace no assistance.

"My private regard" . . . he repeated.

A smile of contempt on Lord Oldborough's countenance.

"Your Lordship's hitherto invulnerable public integrity" . . .

A glance of indignation from Lord Oldborough.

"*Hitherto* invulnerable! — Your Grace will explain."

“ Let these . . . these fatal notes . . . letters . . . unfortunately got into the hands of a leading . . . impracticable member of opposition . . . and by him laid . . . Would that I had been apprised . . . or could have conceived it possible . . . time enough to prevent that step . . . but it was done before I had the slightest intimation — laid before his Majesty . . . ”

Lord Oldborough calmly received the letters from his Grace.

“ My own hand-writing, and private seal, I perceive.”

The Duke sighed — And whilst Lord Oldborough drew out, opened, and read the first letter in the parcel — his Grace went on —

“ This affair has thrown us all into the greatest consternation — It is to be brought before parliament immediately . . . unless a resignation should take place . . . which we should all deplore . . . The impudence, the inveteracy of that fellow, is astonishing . . . no silenc-

ing him — We might hush up the affair if his Majesty had not been apprised ; but where the interest of the service is concerned, his Majesty is warm."

" His Majesty !" cried Lord Oldborough — " His Majesty could not, I trust, for a moment imagine these letters to be mine ? "

" But for the hand and seal which I understood your Lordship to acknowledge, I am persuaded his Majesty could not have believed it."

" Believed ! — My King ! . . . did he believe it ? " cried Lord Oldborough — His agitation was for a moment excessive, uncontrollable — " No ! that I will never believe, till I have it from his own lips." — Then commanding himself —

" Your Grace will have the goodness to leave these letters with me till to morrow."

His Grace, with infinite politeness and regret, was under the necessity of refusing this request — His orders were

only to show the letters to his Lordship, and then to restore them to the hands of the member of opposition, who had laid them before his Majesty.

Lord Oldborough took off the cover of one of the letters, on which was merely the address and seal — The address was written also at the bottom of the letter enclosed, therefore the cover could not be of the least importance, “The Duke could not,” Lord Oldborough said, “refuse to leave this with him?”

To this his Grace agreed — “protesting that he was far from wishing to make difficulties. — “If there was any thing else he could do any thing his Lordship would wish to have privately insinuated, or publicly said?”

His Lordship with proud thanks, assured the Duke he did not wish to have any thing privately insinuated, and whatever it was necessary to say or do publicly, he should do himself, or give orders to have done. His Lordship en-

tered into no further explanation. — The Duke at last was obliged to take his leave “earnestly hoping and trusting that this business would terminate to his Lordship’s entire satisfaction.”

No sooner was the Duke gone, than Lord Oldborough rang for his carriage.

“Immediately — and Mr. Temple instantly.” —

Whilst his carriage was coming to the door; in the shortest manner possible Lord Oldborough stated the facts to his secretary, that letters had been forged in his Lordship’s name, promising to certain persons — promotion in the army — and navy — gratification — and pensions. Some of the letters were addressed to persons who had actually obtained promotion, shortly after the time of these letters, other letters contained reproaches for having been ill used. Even from the rapid glance Lord Oldborough had taken of these papers, he had retained the names of several of the persons to whom

they were addressed — and the nature of the promotion obtained. They were persons who could have had no claim upon an honest minister. — His Lordship left a list of them with Mr. Temple — also the cover of the letter, on which was a specimen of the forged writing and the private seal. —

“ I am going to the King. — His Majesty probably has set out for Windsor. — If so I shall follow him. — In my absence, Mr. Temple, think for me — I know you feel for me. — The object is, to discover the authors of this forgery.” —

“ My Lord, may I consult with Mr. Alfred Percy ? ”

“ Yes — with no other person — ”

On going to the palace Lord Oldborough found, that the King had set out for Windsor — he followed him thither — arrived just as his Majesty was mounting his horse. — Surprised at the sight of the minister the King took his

foot out of the stirrup, and prepared to dismount.

"I beg I may not detain your Majesty — I see I am late," — said Lord Oldborough.

"Is the business urgent, my Lord?"

"No, please your Majesty, for it concerns principally myself. — It can, therefore, wait your Majesty's leisure at any hour your Majesty may appoint."

The King dismounted instantly.

"This moment, my Lord, I am at leisure for any business that concerns your Lordship."

The King returned to the palace — Lord Oldborough followed, and all the spectators on foot and horseback were left full of curiosity.

Notwithstanding the condescension of his Majesty's words and manner, and the polite promptitude to attend to any business that concerned his Lordship, it was evident to Lord Oldborough's penetration, that there was an unusual coldness and formality in the King's coun-

tenance and deportment, unlike the graciousness of his reception, when satisfied and pleased. — Nor did his air become less reserved, when they were alone in the cabinet; on the contrary, the King looked as one prepared to hear, but determined to say as little as possible.

Lord Oldborough placed himself so as to give the King the advantage of the light, which he did not fear to have full on his own countenance.

“Please your Majesty, certain letters, signed with my name, and sealed with my seal, have, I am informed, been laid before your Majesty.”

“Your Lordship has been rightly informed.”

“I trust I hope your Majesty”

At the firm assertion, in the tone with which Lord Oldborough pronounced, *I trust* — his Majesty's eye changed — and moved away from Lord Oldborough's, when he, with respectful interrogation

of tone, added "I *hope* your Majesty could not believe those letters to be mine."

"Frankly, my Lord," said the King, assuming an open air — "the assertions, the insinuations of no man, or set of men, of any rank, or weight in my dominions, could by any imaginable means have induced me to conceive it possible, that such letters had been written by your Lordship. Not for one moment could my belief have been compelled by any evidence, less strong than your Lordship's hand-writing and seal. I own, I thought I knew your Lordship's seal and writing; but I find, and rejoice to find, that I have been deceived."

"I thank your Majesty — I cannot feel surprise, that a forgery and a counterfeit, which, at first view, compelled my own belief of their being genuine, should for a moment, have deceived your Majesty. But, I own, I had flattered

myself, that my sovereign knew my heart and character yet better than my seal and signature."

"Undoubtedly, my Lord."—

"And I should have hoped, that, if your Majesty had perused those letters, no assertions could have been necessary, on my part, to convince your Majesty, that they *could* not be mine.—I have now only to rejoice, that your Majesty is undeceived—And that I have not intruded *unnecessarily* upon your Majesty with this explanation.—I am fully sensible of your Majesty's goodness, in having thus permitted me to make, as early as possible, to your Majesty, this assertion of my innocence.—For the proofs of it, and for the detection of the guilty, I am preparing; and I hope to make these as clear to your Majesty, as your Majesty's assurance of the pleasure you feel in being undeceived is satisfactory . . . consolatory to me——I detain your Majesty no longer," concluded

Lord Oldborough, with a bow of profound yet proud respect.

“ My Lord,” said the King, “ I have no doubt that this affair will redound to your honor, and *terminate to your Lordship’s entire satisfaction.*”

The very phrase used by the Duke of Greenwich.

“ As to myself, your Lordship can have no further anxiety, but I wish your Lordship’s endeavors to detect and bring proofs home to the guilty may be promptly successful — for the gratification of your own feelings, and the satisfaction of the public mind, before the matter should be brought forward in parliament.

As his Majesty quitted the cabinet he added some gracious phrases, expressive of the high esteem he felt for the minister, and the interest he had always, and should always take, in whatever could contribute to his public and private . . . *satisfaction*” — (again).

To an eye and ear less practised in

courts than this minister, all that had been said would have been really satisfactory, but Lord Oldborough discerned a secret embarrassment in the smile, a constraint in the manner, a care, an effort to be gracious in the language, a caution, a rounding of the periods, a recurrence to technical phrases of compliment and amity, a want of the free fluent language of the heart : language which, as it flows, whether from sovereign or subject, leaves a trace, that the art of courtier or of monarch cannot imitate — In all attempts at such imitation, there is a want, of which vanity and even interest is not always sensible, but which feeling perceives instantly — Lord Oldborough felt it — and twice, during this audience, he was on the point of offering his resignation, and twice, exerting strong power over himself, he refrained.

He saw plainly, that he was not where he had been in the King's confidence or favor ; that his enemies had been at

work, and, in some measure, had succeeded; that suspicions had been infused into the King's mind.—That his Majesty had doubted him, his Majesty had confessed — and Lord Oldborough discerned, that there was no genuine joy at the moment his Majesty was undeceived, no real anxiety for his honor, only the ostensible manifestation unsuitable to the occasion — repeatable — or recordable.

Still there was nothing of which he could complain; every expression, if written down or repeated, must have appeared proper and gracious from the sovereign to his minister; and for that minister to resign at such a moment, from pride or pique, would have been fatal to the dignity, perhaps to the integrity of his character.

Lord Oldborough reasoned thus as he stood before the King, and compelled himself, during the whole audience, and to the last parting moment, to preserve an air and tone of calm respectful self-possession. His Majesty mounted his

horse, and galloped off to take a ride in the park; while, full of care, his Lordship got into his carriage to return to town.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DURING Lord Oldborough's absence his faithful secretary had been active in his service. Mr. Temple went immediately to his friend Alfred Percy. Alfred had just returned fatigued from the courts, and was resting himself, in conversation with his wife and Caroline.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Alfred," said Mr. Temple, "but I must take you away from these ladies to consult you on particular business."

"Oh! let the particular business wait till he has rested himself," said Mrs. Percy, "unless it be a matter of life and death."

"Life and death!" cried Lady Frances Arlington, running in at the open door. "Yes! it is a matter of life and death. . . . Stay, Mr. Temple! Mr.

Percy! going the moment I come into the room — Impossible!”

“Impossible it would be,” said Mr. Temple, “in any other case But——.”

“When a lady’s in the case,
You know all other things of course give place,”

cried Lady Frances. “So positively, gentlemen, I stop the way. — But Mr. Temple, to comfort you — for I never saw a man, gallant, or ungallant, look so impatient; I shall not be able to stay above a moment Thank you, Mrs. Percy, I can’t sit down Mrs. Crabstock, the crossiest of Crabstocks and stiffest of pattern women, is in the carriage waiting for me. — Give me joy — I have accomplished my purpose, and without Lady Jane Granville’s assistance — obtained a permit to go with Lady Trant, and made her take me to Lady Angelica’s last night. — Grand conversation! — Saw the German Baron! — Caught both the profiles — have ’em here

... defy you not to smile. — Look," cried her Ladyship, drawing out of her *ridicule* a caricature — which she put into Caroline's hand, and, whilst she was looking at it, Lady Frances went on speaking rapidly.

"Only a sketch, a scrawl in pencil, while they thought I was copying a sonnet to wisdom — on the worst bit of paper too, in the world . . . old cover of a letter I stole from Lady Trant's *ridicule*, while she was at cards. — Mr. Temple, you shall see my chef d'œuvre, by and by; don't look at the reverse of the medal, pray. — Did not I tell you, you were the most impatient man in the world?"

It was true, that Mr. Temple was at this instant most impatient to get possession of the paper, for on the back of that cover of the letter, on which the caricature was drawn, the hand-writing of the direction appeared to him . . . He dared scarcely believe his eyes — his hopes.

"Mrs. Crabstock, my Lady . . .," said the footman, "is waiting."

“ I know, Sir,” said Lady Frances . . .
“ So, Caroline, you won’t see the likeness —
— Very well ; if I can’t get a compliment, I must be off. — When you draw a caricature, I won’t praise it. — Here ! Mr. Temple, one look, since you are dying for it.”

“ One look will not satisfy me ;” cried Mr. Temple, seizing the paper : “ your Ladyship must leave the drawing with us till to-morrow.”

“ *Us — must.* — Given at our court of St. James’s. — Lord Oldborough’s own imperative style.”

“ Imperative ! no ; humbly I beseech your Ladyship, thus humbly,” cried Mr. Temple, kneeling in jest, but keeping in earnest fast hold of the paper.

“ But why ? Why ? Are you acquainted with Lady Angelica ? I did not know you knew Lady Angelica.”

“ It is excellent ! — It is admirable — I cannot let it go This hand, that seized it, long shall hold the prize.”

"The man's mad — But don't think I'll give it to you — I would not give it to my mother but I'll lend it to you, if you'll tell me honestly why you want it."

"Honestly — I want to show it to a particular friend, who will be delighted with it."

"Tell me who, this minute, or you shall not have it."

"Mrs. Crabstock, my Lady, bids me say, the Duchess —."

"The Duchess — The dense! — if she's come to the Duchess, I must go. — I hope your man, Mrs. Percy, won't tell Mrs. Crabstock he saw this gentleman kneeling."

"Mrs. Crabstock's getting out, my Lady," said the footman, returning. —

"Mr. Temple, for mercy's sake, get up."

"Never, till your Ladyship gives me the drawing."

"There! there! let me go — audacious!"

“ Good morning to you, Mrs. Percy, — Good bye, Caroline. — Be at Lady Jane’s to night, for I’m to be there.”

Her Ladyship ran off, and met Mrs. Crabstock on the stairs, with whom we leave her to make her peace as she pleases.

“ My dear Temple, I believe you are out of your senses,” said Alfred, “ I never saw any man so importunate about a drawing, that is not worth a straw . . . trembling with eagerness, and kneeling! — Caroline, what do you think Rosamond would have thought of all this ?”

“ If she knew the whole, she would have thought I acted well,” said Mr. Temple. — “ But come, I have business.”

Alfred took him into his study, and there the whole affair was explained. — Great was Alfred’s astonishment . . . Mr. Temple had brought with him the specimen of the forgery, to show Alfred, and, upon comparing it with the handwriting on the cover of the letter on which the caricature was drawn, the

similarity appeared to be strikingly exact. — The cover, which had been stolen, as Lady Frances Arlington said, from Lady Trant's *ridicule*, was directed to Captain Nuttall. — He was one of the persons to whom forged letters had been written, as appeared by the list which Lord Oldborough had left with Mr. Temple. The secretary was almost certain, that his Lordship had never written with his own hand to any Captain Nuttall; but this he could ask the moment he should see Lord Oldborough again. — It seemed as if this paper had never been actually used as the cover of a letter, for it had no post-mark, seal, or wafer. — Upon further inspection, it was perceived, that a *t* had been left out in the name of *Nuttall*, and it appeared probable, that the cover had been thrown aside, and a new one written in consequence of this omission. — But Alfred did not think it possible, that Lady Trant could be the forger of these letters, because he had seen some of her Ladyship's notes of in-

itation to Caroline, and they were written in a wretched cramped hand.

“ But that cramped hand might be feigned to conceal the powers of penmanship,” said Mr. Temple.

“ Well! granting her Ladyship’s talents were equal to the mere execution, Alfred persisted in thinking she had not abilities sufficient to invent or combine all the parts of such a scheme — She might be an accomplice, but she must have had a principal — And who could that principal be —— ? ”

The same suspicion, the same person, came at the same moment, into the heads of both gentlemen, as they sat looking at each other.

“ There is an intimacy between them ” — said Alfred — “ Recollect all the pains Lady Trant took for Mrs. Falconer about English Clay — They ”

“ Mrs. Falconer ! —— But how could she possibly get at Lord Oldborough’s private seal — a seal that is always locked up — a seal never used to any common

letter, never to any but those written by his own hand. to some private friend, and on some very particular occasion — Since I have been with him I have not seen him use that seal three times” —

“ When and to whom, can you recollect?” said Alfred.

“ I recollect! — I have it all!” exclaimed Mr. Temple, striking the table — “ I have it . . . But, Lady Frances Arlington! I am sorry she is gone.”

“ Why! what of her? — Lady Frances can have nothing more to do with the business?”

“ She has a great deal more, I can assure you — but without knowing it.”

“ Of that I am certain, or all the world would have known it long ago — but . . . Tell me how? —”

“ I recollect, at the time when I was dangling after Lady Frances . . . There's good in every thing . . . just before she went down to Falconer-Court, her Ladyship who, you know, has always some reigning fancy, was distracted about

what she called, *bread-seals* — She took the impression of seals off, with bread . . . no matter how, but she did, and used to torment me . . . no — I thought it a great pleasure at the time . . . to procure for her all the pretty seals I could."

"But, surely, you did not give her Lord Oldborough's?"

"I! — not I! — how could you imagine such a thing?"

"You were in love, and might have forgot consequences."

"A man in love may forget every thing, I grant . . . except his fidelity — No — I never gave the seal — but I perfectly recollect Lady Frances showing it to me in her collection, and my asking her how she came by it." —

"And how did she?"

"From the cover of a note which the Duke, her uncle, had received from Lord Oldborough, and I, at the time, remembered his Lordship's having written it to the Duke of Greenwich, on the

birth of his grandson. Lord Oldborough had, upon a former occasion, affronted his Grace by sending him a note sealed with a wafer — this time his Lordship took special care, and sealed it with his private *seal of honor*."

"Well! But how does this bring the matter home to Mrs. Falconer?" said Alfred.

"Stay — I am bringing it as near home to her as possible — We all went down to Falconer-Court together — And there I remember Lady Frances had her collection of bread-seals, and was daubing and colouring them with vermillion . . . and Mrs. Falconer was so anxious about them — and Lady Frances gave her several . . . I must see Lady Frances again directly, to inquire whether she gave her, among the rest, Lord Oldborough's — I'll go to Lady Jane Granville's this evening on purpose — But had I not better go this moment to Lady Trant?"

Alfred advised, that having traced the

matter thus far, they should not hazard giving any alarm to Lady Trant, or to Mrs. Falconer, but should report to Lord Oldborough what progress had been made.

Mr. Temple accordingly went home, to be in readiness for his Lordship's return. — During Lord Oldborough's drive from Windsor, the first exaltation of indignant pride having subsided, and his cool judgment reflecting upon what had passed, he considered that, however satisfactory to his own mind might be the feeling of his innocence, the proofs of it were necessary to satisfy the public; he saw that his character would be left doubtful, and at the mercy of his enemies, if he were in pique and resentment hastily to resign, before he had vindicated his integrity. — “*If your proofs be produced, my Lord!*” — these words recurred to him, and his anxiety to obtain these proofs rose high — and high was his satisfaction the moment he saw his secretary; for, by the first glance

at Mr. Temple's countenance he perceived, that some discovery had been made.

Alfred, that night, received, through Mr. Temple, his Lordship's request, that he would obtain what further information he could relative to the private seal, in whatever way he thought most prudent. — His Lordship trusted entirely to his discretion — Mr. Temple was engaged with other business.

Alfred went with Caroline to Lady Jane Granville's, to meet Lady Frances Arlington; he entered into conversation, and by degrees brought her to his point, playing all the time with her curiosity, and humoring her childishness, while he carried on his cross-examination.

At first she could not recollect any thing about making the seals he talked of — "It was a fancy that had passed — and a past fancy," she said, "was like a past love, or a past beauty, good for nothing but to be forgotten." — However,

by proper leading of the witness, and suggesting time, place, and circumstance, he did bring to the fair lady's mind all that he wanted her to remember. "She could not conceive what interest Mr. Percy could take in the matter . . . it was some jest about Mr. Temple, she was sure . . . Yes, she did recollect a seal with a Cupid riding a lion, that Mr. Temple gave her just before they went to Falconer-Court—was that what he meant?"

"No—but a curious seal"—(Alfred described the device).

"Lord Oldborough's!—Yes, there was some such odd seal . . . But it was not given to her by Mr. Temple—she took *that* from a note to his uncle, the Duke of Greenwich."

"Yes—that Alfred said he knew; but what did her Ladyship do with it?"

"You know how I got it!—Bless me, you seem to know every thing I do and say—You know my affairs vastly

well — you act the conjurer admirably — pray, can you tell me who I am to marry ?” —

“ That I will — when your Ladyship has told me to whom you gave that seal ?”

“ That I would, and welcome, if I could recollect—but I really can’t—If you think I gave it to Mr. Temple, I assure you, you are mistaken, you may ask him.”

“ I know your Ladyship did not give it to Mr. Temple—But to whom *did* you give it ?”

“ I remember now . . . not to any gentleman after all—you are positively out—

“ I gave it to Mrs. Falconer.”

“ You are certain of that, Lady Frances Arlington ?”

“ I am certain, Mr. Alfred Percy.”

“ And how can you prove it to me, Lady Frances ?”

“ The easiest way in the world . . . by asking Mrs. Falconer—Only I don’t

go there now much, since Georgiana and I have quarrelled—but what can make you so curious about it?”

“That’s a secret—May I ask, if your Ladyship would know the seal again if you saw it?—Is this any thing like the impression?”—(showing her the seal on the forged cover).

“The very same that I gave Mrs. Falconer, I’ll swear to it—I’ll tell you how I know it particularly. There’s a little outer rim here, with points to it, which there is not to the other—I fastened my bread-seal into an old setting of my own, from which I had lost the stone—Mrs. Falconer took a fancy to it, among a number of others, so I let her have it.”

“Now I have answered all your questions—Answer mine—Who am I to marry?”

“Your Ladyship will marry whoever . . . your Ladyship *pleases*.”

“That was an ambiguous answer,” she observed, “for that she *pleased* every

body." ——— Her Ladyship was going to run on with some further questions, but Alfred, pretending that the oracle was not permitted to answer more explicitly, left her completely in the dark as to what his meaning had been in this whole conversation.

He reported progress to Lord Oldborough—and his Lordship slept as boundly this night as he did the night after he had been attacked by the mob.

The next morning the first person he desired to see was Mr. Falconer—his Lordship sent for him into his cabinet.

"Mr. Commissioner Falconer, I promised to give you notice whenever I should see any probability of my going out of power."

"Good Heaven! my Lord," exclaimed the Commissioner, starting back—The surprise, the consternation were real—Lord Oldborough had his eye upon him to determine that point.

"Impossible, surely!—I hope . . ."

His hope flitted at the moment to the

Duke of Greenwich—but returned instantly—he had made no terms . . . had missed his time—If Lord Oldborough should go out of office, his place, his pension, gone—utter ruin.

Lord Oldborough marked the vacillation and confusion of his countenance, and saw that he was quite unprepared.

“ I hope . . . Merciful Powers! I trust . . . I thought your Lordship had triumphed over all your enemies, and was firmer in favor and power than ever.—What can have occurred . . . ? ”

Without making any answer, Lord Oldborough beckoned to the Commissioner to approach nearer the window where his Lordship was standing, and then suddenly put into his hand the cover with the forged hand-writing and seal.

“ What am I to understand by this, my Lord? ” said the bewildered Commissioner, turning it backwards and forwards . . . “ Major Spry!—I never saw the man in my life . . . May I ask, my

Lord, what I am to comprehend from this?"

"I see, Sir, that you know nothing of the business."—

The whole was explained by Lord Oldborough succinctly—The astonishment and horror in the poor Commissioner's countenance and gestures, and still more, the eagerness with which he begged to be permitted to try to discover the authors of this forgery, were sufficient proofs, that he had not the slightest suspicion, that the guilt could be traced to any of his own family.

Lord Oldborough's look, fixed on the Commissioner, expressed what it had once before expressed.

"Sir, from my soul I pity you!"

The Commissioner saw this look, and wondered why Lord Oldborough should pity *him* at a time when all his Lordship's feelings should naturally be for himself.

"My Lord, I would engage we shall discover . . . we shall trace it."

"I believe that I have discovered . . . that I have traced it," said Lord Oldborough — and he sighed.

Now that sigh was more incomprehensible to the Commissioner than all the rest, and he stood with his lips open for a moment, before he could utter,

"Why then resign, my Lord?"

"That is my affair," said Lord Oldborough — "Let us, if you please, Sir, think of yours, for, probably, this is the only time I shall ever more have it in my power, to be of the least service to you."

"Oh, my Lord! My Lord, don't say so," said the Commissioner, quite forgetting all his artificial manner, and speaking naturally — "the last time you shall have it in your power! . . . Oh, my dear Lord, don't say so!"

"My dear Sir, I must — it gives me pain — you see it does."

"At such a time as this, to think of me instead of yourself . . . My Lord, I

never knew you till this moment — so well.”

“ Nor I, you, Sir” — said Lord Oldborough — “ It is the more unfortunate for us both, that our connexion and intercourse must now for ever cease.”

“ Never, never, my Lord, if you were to go out of power to morrow . . . which Heaven, in it's mercy and justice, forbid ! . . . I could never forget the goodness . . . I would never desert . . . in spite of all interest . . . I should continue . . . I hope your Lordship would permit me to pay my duty all intercourse could never cease.”

Lord Oldborough saw, and almost smiled at the struggle between the courtier and the man — the confusion in the Commissioner's mind, between his feelings and his interest. Partly his Lordship relieved, and partly he pained Mr. Falconer, by saying, in his firm tone,

“ I thank you, Mr. Falconer — but all intercourse must cease — After this hour we meet no more. I beg you, Sir, to

collect your spirits — and to listen to me calmly — Before this day is at an end, you will understand why all further intercourse between us would be useless to your interest, and incompatible with my honor. — Before many hours are past, a blow will be struck, which will go to your heart . . . for I see you have one . . . and deprive you of the power of thought — It is my wish to make that blow fall as lightly upon you as possible.”

“ Oh, my Lord, your resignation would indeed be a blow, I could never recover . . . The bare apprehension deprives me at this moment of all power of thought, . . . but still I hope. . . .”

“ Hear me, Sir, I beg, without interruption, — It is my business to think for you — Go immediately to the Duke of Greenwich, make what terms with him you can — make what advantage you can of the secret of my approaching resignation, a secret I now put in your power, to communicate to his Grace — and which

no one yet suspects — I having told it to no one living but to yourself. — Go quickly to the Duke — time presses — I wish you success — and a better patron than I have been, than my principles would permit me to be — Farewell, Mr. Falconer.”

The Commissioner moved towards the door, when Lord Oldborough said, “ *Time presses,* ” — but the Commissioner stopped — turned back — could not go . . . The tears, — real tears — rolled down his cheeks — Lord Oldborough went forward, and held out his hand to him — The Commissioner kissed it, with the reverence with which he would have kissed his sovereign’s hand, and bowing, he involuntarily backed to the door, as if quitting the presence of Majesty.

“ It is a pity that man was bred a mere courtier, and that he is cursed with a family, on none of whom there is any dependance ” — thought Lord Oldborough — as the door closed upon the Commissioner for ever.

Lord Oldborough delayed an hour purposely, to give Mr. Falconer advantage of the day with the Duke of Greenwich: then ordered his carriage, and drove to Mrs. Falconer's.

Great was her surprise at the minister's entrance.

.. "Concerned the Commissioner was not at home."

"My business is with Mrs. Falconer."

"My Lord . . . your Lordship, . . . the honor and the pleasure, of a visit Georgiana, my dear. . . ."

Mrs. Falconer nodded to her daughter, who most unwillingly . . . and as if dying with curiosity, retired —

The smile died away upon Mrs. Falconer's lips, as she observed the stern gravity of Lord Oldborough's countenance — She moved a chair towards his Lordship — he stood, and leaning on the back of the chair, paused, as he looked at her. —

"What is to come? — Cunningham perhaps!" . . . thought Mrs. Falconer —

"or perhaps something about John — When will he speak? I can't I must."

"I am happy to see your Lordship looking so well." —

"Is Mrs. Falconer acquainted with Lady Trant?" —

"Lady Trant . . . Yes, my Lord."

"Mercy! Is it possible! — No, for her own sake she would not betray me," . . . thought Mrs. Falconer.

"Intimately?" said Lord Oldborough.

"Intimately That is as one's intimate with every body . . . of a certain sort . . . one visits . . . but no farther . . . I can't say I have the honor"

Mrs. Falconer was so distracted by seeing Lord Oldborough searching in his pocketbook for a letter, that in spite of all her presence of mind, she knew not what she said; and all her presence of countenance failed, when Lord Oldborough placed before her eyes, the cover directed to Captain Nottall.

"Can you guess how this came into Lady Trant's possession, Madam?"

"I protest, my Lord," . . . her voice trembling, in spite of her utmost efforts to command it — "I don't know, ... nor can I conceive"

"Nor can you conceive by whom it was written, Madam?"

"It appears, ... It bears a resemblance . . . some likeness . . . as far as I recollect but it is so long since I have seen your Lordship's own hand . . . And hands are so like . . . sometimes . . . And I am so bad a judge Every hand, all fashionable hands, are so like."

"And every seal, like every seal?" — said Lord Oldborough, placing the counterfeit seal before Mrs. Falconer. —

"I recommend it to you, Madam, to waste no further time in evasion : but to deliver to me the counterpart of this seal, the impression of my private seal, which you had from Lady Frances Arlington."

"A mere bread seal! her Ladyship surely has not said, ... I really

have lost it, ... if I ever had it
I declare your Lordship terrifies me so,
by this strange mode” . . .

“ I recommend it to you once more, Madam, and for the last time, I earnestly recommend it to you, to deliver up to me that seal, for I have sworn to my belief, that it is in your possession ; a warrant has in consequence been issued, to seize and search your papers, . . . the persons who are to execute it are below — The purport of my present visit . . . of which I should gladly have been spared the pain, is to save you, Madam, from the public disgrace of having a warrant executed. — Do not faint, Madam, if you can avoid it, nor go into hysterics — for if you do — I must retire — And the warrant must be executed — your best course is to open that desk, to give me up the seal, to make to me at this instant a full confession of all you know of this transaction — If you do thus, — for your husband’s sake, Madam, I will, as far as I can consistently with what is due to

myself, spare you the shame of an arrest."——

Mrs. Falconer, with trembling hands, unlocked the desk, delivered the seal.

"And a letter which I see in this same hand-writing, Madam, if you please."

She gave it —— And then unable to support herself longer, sunk upon a sofa, — But she neither fainted nor screamed, — She was aware of the consequences — Lord Oldborough opened the window, to give her air —— She was relieved by a burst of tears — and was silent —— and nothing was heard but her sobs, which she endeavored to suppress in vain —— She was more relieved on looking up by one glance at Lord Oldborough's countenance, where she saw compassion working strongly.——

But before she could take any advantage of it, the expression was changed, the feeling was controlled, he was conscious of it's weakness — he recollected what public justice, and justice to his own character required — he recollected

all the treachery, the criminality, of which she had been guilty.

“Madam, you are not now in a condition I see to explain yourself further, — I will relieve you from my presence — my reproaches you will never hear — But I shall expect from you, before one hour, such an avowal in writing of this whole transaction, as may, with the written confession of Lady Trant, afford the proofs which are due to my Sovereign, and to the public, of my integrity.”

Mrs. Falconer bowed her head, — covered her face — clasped her hands in agony; as Lord Oldborough retired, she sprang up, followed to throw herself at his feet, yet without knowing what she could say.

“The Commissioner is innocent! — If you forsake him he is undone — All, all of us, utterly ruined; — Oh, Georgiana! Georgiana! where are you? speak for me!”

Georgiana was in an inner apartment, trying on a new robe, *à la Géorgienne*.

“Whatever you may wish further to say to me, Madam,” said Lord Oldborough, disengaging himself from her, and passing decidedly on, before Georgiana appeared — “You will put in writing, and let me have it within this hour — or never.”

Within that hour, Commissioner Falconer brought, for Lord Oldborough, the paper his wife had drawn up — but the Commissioner was obliged to deliver it to Mr. Temple, for Lord Oldborough had so ordered, and his Lordship persevered in refusing to see him more — Mrs. Falconer’s paper was worded with all the art and address of which she was mistress, and all the pathos she could command — Lord Oldborough looked only for facts — these he marked with his pencil, and observed where they corroborated and where they differed from Lady Trant’s confession, which Mr. Temple had been charged to obtain during his Lordship’s visit to Mrs. Falconer — The greater part of the night Lord Old-

borough and Mr. Alfred Percy were employed arranging these documents, so as to put the proofs in the clearest and shortest form, to be laid before his Majesty the succeeding day.

It appeared that Mrs. Falconer had been first tempted to these practices by the distress for money, into which extravagant entertainments—or, as she stated, the expenses incident to her situation—expenses which far exceeded her income, had led her. It was supposed, from her having kept open house at times for the minister, that she and the Commissioner had great influence; she had been applied to, presents had been offered, and she had long withstood. But, at length, Lady Trant, acting in concert with her, they had been supplied with information by a clerk in one of the offices, a relation of Lady Trant, who was a vain incautious youth, and, it seems, did not know the use made of his indiscretion—He told what promotions he heard spoken of—what commissions were making out—

The ladies prophesied, and their prophecies being accomplished, they gained credit. For some time they kept themselves behind the scenes — and many, applying to A. B.—and dealing with they did not know whom, paid for promotion, which would have come unpaid for — Others paid, and were never promoted, and wrote letters of reproach — Captain Nuttall was among these, and he it was, who, finding himself duped, first stirred in the business, and by means of an active member of opposition, to whom he made known his secret grievance, brought the whole to light.

The proofs arranged . . . (and Lord Oldborough never slept till they were perfected) he reposed tranquilly — The next day, asking an audience of his Majesty, he simply laid the papers on his Majesty's table, observing, that he had been so fortunate as to succeed in tracing the forgery, and that he trusted these papers contained all the necessary proofs.

His Lordship bowed and retired in-

stantly, leaving his Majesty to examine the papers alone.

The resolution to resign his ministerial station, had long been forming in Lord Oldborough's mind. It was not a resolution taken suddenly in pride or pique, but after reflection, and upon strong reasons. It was a measure which he had long been revolving in his secret thoughts. — During the enthusiasm of political life, the proverbial warnings against the vanity of ambition, and the danger of dependance on the favor of princes, had passed on his ear but as a school-boy's lesson, a phrase 'to point a moral, or adorn a tale.' He was not a reading man, and the maxims of books he disregarded or disbelieved; but in the observations he made for himself he trusted; the lessons he drew from life were never lost upon him, and he acted in consequence of that which he believed, with a decision, vigor, and invariability, seldom found even among philosophers. — Of late years he had, in real life, seen striking

instances of the treachery of courtiers, and had felt some symptoms of insecurity in the smile of princes. — Fortune had been favorable to him — she was fickle — he feared her — he determined to quit her before she should change — Ambition, it is true, had tempted him; he had risen to her highest pinnacle, he would not be hurled from high, he would descend voluntarily, and with dignity. — Lord Oldborough's habits of thought were as different as possible from those of a metaphysician; he had reflected less upon the course of his own mind, than upon almost any other subject; but he knew human nature practically; disquisitions on habit, passion, or the sovereign good, were unread by him, nor, in the course of his life, had he ever formed a system, moral or prudential; but the same penetration, the same *longanimity*, which enabled him to govern the affairs of a great nation, gave him, when his attention turned towards himself, a *prévoyance* for his own happiness. — In the meridian

of life he had cherished ambition as the only passion, that could supply him with motive strong enough to call great powers into great action. But of late years he had felt something not only of the waywardness of fortune, but of the approaches of age — not in his mind, but in his health, which had suffered by the exertions of his mind. The attacks of hereditary gout had become more violent, and more frequent. If he lived, these would, probably, often incapacitate him, at seasons, from his arduous ministerial duties — Much, that he did well, must be ill done by deputy — He had ever reprobated the practice of leaving the business of the nation to be done by clerks and underlings in office. — Yet to this the minister, however able, however honest, must come at last, if he persist in engrossing business and power, beyond what an individual can wield. — Love for his country, a sense of his own honor, integrity, and consistency, here combined to determine this

great minister to retire while it was yet time, to secure, at once, the dignity and happiness of the evening of life — The day had been devoted to good and high purposes — that was enough — he could now, self-satisfied and full of honor, bid adieu to ambition. — This resolution, once formed, was fixed. In vain even his sovereign endeavored to dissuade him from carrying it into execution.

When the King had examined the papers which Lord Oldborough had laid before him, his Majesty sent for his Lordship again, and the moment the minister entered the cabinet, his Majesty expressed his perfect satisfaction in seeing, that his Lordship had, with so little trouble, and with his usual ability, got to the bottom of this affair.

What was to be done next? — The Duke of Greenwich was to be summoned — His Grace was in astonishment, when he saw the papers which contained Lord Oldborough's complete vindication,

and the crimination of Mrs. Falconer — Through the whole, as he read on, his Grace had but one idea, viz. “Commissioner Falconer has deceived me with false intelligence of the intended resignation.” — Not one word was said by Lord Oldborough to give his Grace hope of that event — till the member of opposition by whom the forged letters had been produced, till all those who knew or had heard any thing of the transaction, were clearly and fully apprised of the truth — After this was established, and that all saw Lord Oldborough clear and bright in honor, and, at least apparently, as firm in power as he had ever been, to the astonishment of his sovereign his Lordship begged permission to resign.

Whatever might have been the effect of misrepresentation to lower Lord Oldborough's favor, at the moment when he spoke of retiring, his King recollected all his past services; all that must, in future, be hazarded and lost in parting

with such a minister! so eminent in abilities, of such tried integrity, of such fidelity, such attachment to his person, such a zealous supporter of royalty, such a favorite with his people, so successful as well as so able a minister! Never was he so much valued as at this moment. All his sovereign's early attachment returned in full strength and warmth.

“No, my Lord, you must not — you will not leave me!”

These simple words, spoken with the warmth of the heart, touched Lord Oldborough more than can be told. It was difficult to resist them from a sovereign — especially when he saw tears in the eyes of the monarch whom he loved —

But his resolution was taken — He thanked his Majesty, not with the commonplace thanks of courtiers, but with his whole heart and soul he thanked his Majesty for this gracious condescension — this testimony of approbation — these proofs of sensibility to his attachment, which paid — overpaid him, in a moment,

for the labors of a life — The recollection of them would be the glory, the solace of his age — could never leave his memory while life lasted — would, he thought, be present to him, if he should retain his senses, in his dying moment — But — he was, in the midst of this strong feeling, firm to the resolution his reason had taken. — He humbly represented, that he had waited for a favorable time, when the affairs of the country were in a prosperous train, when there were few difficulties to embarrass those whom his Majesty might name to succeed to his place at the head of administration — There were many who were ambitious of that station — Zeal, talents, and the activity of youth, were at his Majesty's command. For himself, he found it necessary for his health and happiness, to retire from public business; and to resign the arduous trust, with which he had been honored.

“My Lord, if I must accept of your resignation, I must — but I do it with

regret — Is there any thing your Lordship wishes . . . any thing you will name, for yourself or your friends, that I can do, to show my sense of your services and merit?"

"For myself, your Majesty's bounty has left me nothing to wish."

"For your friends then, my Lord? — Let me have the satisfaction of obliging you through them."

Nothing could be more gracious, or more gratifying than the whole of this parting audience. — It was Lord Oldborough's last audience.

The news of his resignation, quickly whispered at Court, was not that day publicly known or announced. The next morning his Lordship's levee was crowded beyond example in the memory of ministers. Mr. Temple, by his Lordship's order, announced as soon as possible the minister's having resigned. — All were in astonishment — many in sorrow — some few — a very few of the most insignificant of the crowd, persons incapable

of generous sympathy, who thought they could follow their own paltry interests unnoticed, left the room in consequence of Mr. Temple's information, without paying their farewell respects to this great minister minister now no more.

The moment he appeared, there was sudden silence. — All eyes were fixed upon him, every one pressing to get into the circle.

“Gentlemen, thank you for these marks of attention — of regard — Mr. Temple has told you . . . you know, my friends, that I am a man without power.” —

“We know,” answered a distinguished gentleman, “that you are Lord Oldborough. — With or without power, the same in the eyes of your friends, and of the British nation.”

Lord Oldborough bowed low, and looked gratified. — His Lordship then went round the circle with an air more cheerful, more free from reserve, than usual;

with something in his manner more of sensibility, but nothing less of dignity. All who merited distinction, he distinguished by some few appropriate words, which each remembered afterwards, and repeated to their families and friends. He spoke or listened to each individual with the attention of one, who is courting, not quitting popularity. Free from that restraint and responsibility, which his public and ministerial duties had imposed upon him, he now entered into the private concerns of all, and gave his parting assistance or counsel. — He noted all grievances — registered all promises that ought to be recommended to the care of his successor in office. The wishes of many, to whom he had forborne to give any encouragement, he now unexpectedly fulfilled and surpassed. When all were satisfied, and had nothing more to ask, or to hope, from him, they yet delayed, and parted from Lord Oldborough with difficulty and regret. —

A proof that justice commands more

than any other quality, the respect and gratitude of mankind. — Take time and numbers into the calculation, and all discover, in their turn, the advantage of this virtue. This minister a few regretted instances excepted, — had shown no favor, but strict justice, in his patronage.

All Lord Oldbrough's requests for his friends were granted, all his recommendations attended to; it was grateful to him to feel, that his influence lasted after his power had ceased. Though the sun had apparently set, it's parting rays continued to brighten and cheer the prospect.

Under a new minister, Mr. Temple declined accepting of the embassy, which had been offered to him. Remuneration suitable to his services, and to the high terms, in which Lord Oldbrough had spoken of his merit, was promised; and without waiting to see in what form, or manner, this promise would be accomplished, the secretary asked, and obtained permission, to accompany his revered

master to his retirement. Alfred Percy, zealous and ardent in Lord Oldborough's service, the more this great man's character had risen upon his admiration, had already hastened to the country to prepare every thing at Clermont-Park for his reception. — By his orders, that establishment had been retrenched; by Alfred Percy's activity it was restored. — Services, which the richest nobleman in the land could have purchased, or the highest have commanded, Alfred was proud to pay as a voluntary tribute to a noble character.

Lord Oldborough set out for the country at a very early hour in the morning, and no one previously knew his intentions, except Mr. Temple. He was desirous to avoid what it had been whispered was the design of the people, to attend him in crowds through the streets of the metropolis.

As they drove out of town, Lord Oldborough recollected, that in some account either of the Duke of Marlborough, or the Duke of Ormond's leaving

London, after his dismissal from court, it is said, that of all those whom he the Duke had served, all those who had courted and flattered him in the time of his prosperity and power, none showed any gratitude, or attachment, excepting one page, who appeared at the coach door as his master was departing, and gave some signs of genuine sorrow and respect.

“I am fortunate,” said Lord Oldborough, “in having few complaints to make of ingratitude. — I make none. — The few I might make,” — continued his Lordship, who now rewarded Mr. Temple’s approved fidelity, by speaking to him with the openness and confidence of friendship — “the few I might make have been chiefly caused by errors of my own in the choice of the persons I have obliged. — I thank Heaven, however, that upon the whole, I leave public life, not only with a good conscience, but with a good opinion of human nature. — I speak not of courtiers, — there is nothing of na-

ture about them, — they are what circumstances make them. — Were I to live my life over again, the hours spent with courtiers are those, which I should most wish to be spared. But by a statesman, or a minister, these cannot be avoided. — For myself, in resigning my ministerial office, I might say, as Charles the Fifth, when he abdicated, said to his successor, ‘ I leave you a heavy burthen ; for since my shoulders have borne it, I have not passed one day exempt from disquietude.’

“ But from the first moment I started in the course of ambition, I was aware that tranquillity must be sacrificed, and to the last moment I abided by the sacrifice. The good I had in view, I have reached, — the prize, at which I aimed, I have won. — The glory of England was my object, — her approbation, my reward. — Generous people ! — If ever I bore toil or peril in your cause, I am rewarded, and never shall you hear me say, that ‘ the unfruitful glories please

no more.'—— And the esteem of my sovereign ! — I possess it. — It is indefeasibly mine. — His favor, his smiles, are his to give, or take away. —— Never shall he hear from me the *wailings* of disappointed ambition."——

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CAROLINE took advantage of the opportunity of returning home with her brother Alfred, when he went to the country to prepare Clermont-Park for the reception of Lord Oldborough. And now she saw her home again with more than wonted delight. Every thing animate and inanimate seemed to smile upon her, every heart rejoiced at her return, and she enjoyed equally the pleasure of loving, and of being beloved by such friends. — She had been amused and admired during her residence in London, but a life of dissipation she had always thought, and now she was convinced from experience, could never suit her taste or character. She would immediately have resumed her former occupations, if Rosamond would have per-

mitted, but Rosamond took entire possession of her at every moment when her father or mother had not claimed their prior right to hear and to be heard.

“ Caroline, my dear, don't flatter yourself that you shall be left in peace . . . See! — she is sitting down to write a letter, as if she had not been away from us these six months . . . You must write to Lady Jane Granville! — Well, finish your gratitude quickly — and no more writing, reading, or drawing, this day, you must think of nothing but talking, or listening to me.”

Much as she loved talking in general, Rosamond now so far preferred the pleasure of hearing, that, with her eyes fixed on Caroline, her countenance varying with every variety of Caroline's expression, she sat perfectly silent all the time her sister spoke. — And scarcely was her voice heard, even in exclamation. — But, during the pauses of narrative, when the pause lasted more than a minute, she would say,

“Go on, my dear Caroline, go on. — Tell us something more.”

The conversation was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Mr. Temple — and Rosamond did not immediately find her fluency of speech increase. Mr. Temple had seized the first moment that duty and gratitude to his master and friend permitted, to hasten to the Hills, nor had Lord Oldborough been unmindful of his feelings. Little as his Lordship was disposed to think of love-affairs, it seems, he recollected those of his secretary, for, the morning after their arrival at Clermont-Park, when he proffered his services, Lord Oldborough said, that he had only to trouble Mr. Temple to pay a visit for him, if it would not be disagreeable, to his old friend Mr. Percy. — “Tell him that I know his first wish will be to come to show me, that it is the man, not the minister, for whom he had a regard. Tell him this proof of his esteem is unnecessary — he will wish to see me for another reason — he is a

philosopher — and will have a philosophical curiosity to discover how I exist without ambition. — But of that he cannot yet form a judgment — nor can I. — Therefore, if he pleases, let his visit be delayed till next week. — I have some papers to arrange, which I should wish to show him, and I cannot have them sooner in readiness. — If you, Mr. Temple, can contrive to pass this week at Mr. Percy's, let me not detain you. — There is no fear," added he, smiling, "that in solitude I should be troubled by the spectre, which haunted the Duke of Lerma in his retirement."

Never was man happier than Mr. Temple, when he found himself in the midst of the family circle at the Hills, and seated beside his mistress, free from all cares, all business, all intrigues of courtiers, and restraints of office, no longer in the horrors of attendance and dependance, but with the promise of a competent provision for life, with the consciousness of it's having been honor-

ably obtained; and, to brighten all, the hope, the delightful hope, of soon prevailing on the woman he loved, to become his for ever.

Alfred Percy had been obliged to return directly to London, and for once in his life Mr. Temple profited by the absence of his friend. In the small house at the Hills, Alfred's was the only room that could have been spared for him, and in this room, scarcely fourteen feet square, the ex-secretary found himself lodged more entirely to his satisfaction, than he had ever been in the sumptuous apartments of the great. The happy are not fastidious as to their accommodations, they never miss the painted ceiling, or the long arcade, and their slumbers require no bed of down. — The lover's only fear was, that this happy week would pass too swiftly; and, indeed, time flew unperceived by him, and by Rosamond. One fine day, after dinner, Mrs. Percy proposed, that instead of sitting longer in the house,

they should have their desert of strawberries in some pleasant place in the lawn or wood. Rosamond eagerly seconded this proposal, and whispered,

“ Caroline’s bower.” —

Thither they went. This bower of Caroline’s, this favorite spot, Rosamond, during her sister’s absence, had taken delight in ornamenting, and it did credit as much to her taste, as to her kindness. She had opened a view on one side, to a waterfall among the rocks, on the other, to a winding path descending through the glen. Honeysuckle, rose, and eglantine, near the bower, were in rich and wild profusion ; all these, the song of birds, and even the smell of the new mown grass, seemed peculiarly delightful to Mr. Temple. Of late years, he had been doomed to close confinement in a capital city ; but all his tastes were rural, and, as he said, he feared he should expose himself to the ridicule Dr. Johnson throws on those, “ who talk of sheep and goats, and who babble of green fields.”

Mr. Percy thought Dr. Johnson was rather too intolerant of rural description, and of the praises of a country life, but acknowledged, that he quite agreed with him in disliking pastorals — excepting always that beautiful pastoral, “The Gentle Shepherd.” — Mr. Percy said, that, in his opinion, a life purely pastoral must, if it could be realised, prove as insufferably tiresome in reality, as it usually is found to be in fiction. He hated Delias and shepherdesses, and declared that he should soon grow tired of any companion with whom he had no other occupation in common but “*tending a few sheep.*” There was a vast difference, he thought, between pastoral and domestic life. His idea of domestic life comprised all the varieties of literature, exercise, and amusement for the faculties, with the delights of cultivated society.

The conversation turned from pastoral life and pastorals, to Scotch and English ballads and songs. Their various merits of simplicity, pathos, or elegance, were

compared and discussed. After "*the Reliques of Ancient Poetry*" had been sufficiently admired, Rosamond and Caroline mentioned two modern compositions, both by the same author, each exquisite in it's different style of poetry, 'one beautiful, the other sublime. Rosamond's favorite, was "*the Exile of Erin.*" — Caroline's "*the Mariners of England!*" To justify their tastes, they repeated the poems. Caroline fixed the attention of the company on the flag, which has

" Brav'd a thousand years the battle and the breeze,"

when suddenly her own attention seemed to be distracted by some object in the glen below. She endeavored to go on, but her voice faltered, her colour changed. Rosamond, whose quick eye followed her sister's, instantly caught a glimpse of a gentleman coming up the path from the glen. Rosamond started from her seat, and clasping her hands, exclaimed;

“It is! It is he! — It is Count Altenberg!”

They had not recovered from their astonishment, when Count Altenberg stood before them. — To Mr. Percy, to Mrs. Percy, to Rosamond, to each he spoke, before he said one word to Caroline. — But one look had said all, had spoken, and had been understood.

That he was not married she was certain — for that look said he loved her — and her confidence in his honor was secure. Whatever had delayed his return, or had been mysterious in his conduct, she felt convinced, that he had never been to blame. —

And on his part did he read as distinctly the truth in her countenance? — Was the high colour, the radiant pleasure in that countenance unmarked? — The joy was so veiled by feminine modesty, that he doubted, trembled, and if at last the rapid feelings ended in hope, it was respectful hope. With deference the

most marked, mingled with dignity, tenderness, and passion, he approached Caroline. He was too delicate, too well-bred, to distress her by distinguishing her more particularly, but as he took the seat, which she left for him beside her mother, the open and serene expression of her eye, with the soft sound of her voice, in the few words she answered to what he said, were enough to set his heart at ease. The sight of Mr. Temple had at first alarmed the Count, but the alarm was only momentary. One glance at Rosamond reassured him.

Ideas, which it requires many words to tell, passed instantaneously with the rapidity of light.—After they were seated, some minutes were spent in commonplace questions and answers, such as those, which Benjamin Franklin would wisely put all together into one formula, to satisfy curiosity. Count Altenberg landed the preceding day, had not stopped to see any one in England, had not

even heard of Lord Oldborough's resignation; had proceeded directly to the Hills, had left his equipage at a town a few miles distant — thought he had been fully master of the well-known road, but, the approach having been lately changed, he had missed his way.

This settled, to make room for a more interesting explanation, Mr. Temple had the politeness to withdraw. Rosamond had the humanity, and Caroline the discretion, to accompany him in his walk.

Count Altenberg then said, addressing himself to Mr. Percy, on whose regard he seemed to have reliance, and to Mrs. Percy, whom he appeared most anxious to interest in his favor.

“ You certainly, Sir, as a man of penetration, and a father; you, madam, as a mother, and as a lady, who must have been accustomed to the admiration of our sex, could not avoid seeing, when I was in this country before, that I felt the highest admiration, that I had formed

the strongest attachment for your daughter? — Miss Caroline Percy.”

Mr. and Mrs. Percy both acknowledged, that they thought Count Altenberg had shown some preference for Caroline ; but as he had never declared his attachment, they had not felt themselves justified in inferring more from his attentions, than his general good opinion. — A change in his manner, which they observed shortly before they quitted Hungerford-Castle, had impressed them with the idea, that he had no such views as they had once been led to imagine, and their never having heard any thing from him since, had confirmed them in this belief.

“ Painful exquisitely painful, as it was to me,” said Count Altenberg, “ I felt myself bound in honor to leave you in that error, and at all hazards to myself, to suffer you to continue under that persuasion, as I was then, and have been till within these few days, in dread of being obliged to fulfil an engagement,

made without my concurrence or knowledge, and which must for ever have precluded me from indulging the first wish of my heart. — The moment, literally the moment I was at liberty, I hastened hither, to declare my real sentiments, and to solicit your permission to address your daughter. — But before I can expect that permission, before I can hope for your approbation of my suit, an approbation, which I am well aware, must depend entirely upon your opinion of my character — I must, to explain whatever may have appeared unintelligible in my conduct, be permitted to make you fully acquainted with the circumstances, in which I have been placed.

Beginning with the history of his father's letters and his own, respecting the projected marriage with the Countess Christina, he related, nearly as follows, all that passed, after his having, in obedience to his father's summons, returned home. — He found contracts drawn up and ready for his signature — the friends

of both families apprised of the proposed alliance, and every thing actually prepared for his marriage. Remonstrances with his father were vain.—The old Count said that it was impossible to break off the match, that his honor and the honor of his house was pledged.—But independently of all promises, he considered the accomplishment of this marriage as most desirable and advantageous; with all the vehemence of affection, and all the force of parental authority, he charged his son to fulfil his engagements. The old Count was a fond, but an imperious father; a good, but an ambitious man. It was his belief, that love is such a transient passion, that it is folly to sacrifice to it's indulgence any of the solid and permanent interests of life. His experience at courts, and his observation on the gallantries of young princes and nobles, had taught him to believe, that love is not only a transient, but a variable and capricious feeling, easily changing it's object, and subsist-

ing only by novelty. All that his son said of his attachment to Caroline, of the certainty of it's permanence, and of it's being essential to the happiness of his life, the father heard, but as the common language of every youth in love. — He let his son speak without interruption, but smiled incredulous, and listened only as to the voice of one in the paroxysm of a passion, which, however violent, would necessarily subside. — Between the fits, he endeavored to control the fever of his mind, and as a spell repeated these words,

“Albert! see and hear the young Countess Christina — but once — I ask no more.”

Albert, with the respect due to a father, but with the firmness due to himself, and with all the courage, which love only could have given to oppose the authority and affection of a parent, refused to ratify the contract that had been prepared, and declined the proposed interview. — He doubted not, he said, that

the lady was all his father described, beautiful, amiable, and of transcendent talents, he doubted not her power to win any, but a heart already won. He would enter into no invidious comparisons, nor bid defiance to her charms—his own choice was made, he was sure of his constancy, and he thought it not only the most honorable course, but the most respectful to the Lady Christina, ingenuously at once, and without having any interview with her, or her friends, to state the truth—that the treaty had been commenced by his father without his knowledge, and carried on under total ignorance of an attachment he had formed in England. The father, after some expressions of anger and disappointment, was silent, and appeared to acquiesce. He no longer openly urged the proposed interview, but he secretly contrived that it should take place. At a masked ball at court, Count Albert entered into conversation with a Minerva, whose majestic air and figure distinguished her above

her companions, whose language, thoughts, and sentiments, perfectly sustained the character which she assumed. — He was struck with admiration by her talents, and by a certain elevation of thought and sentiment, which, in all she said, seemed the habitual expression of a real character, not the strained language of a feigned personage. — She took off her mask — he was dazzled by her beauty — They were at this moment surrounded by numbers of her friends and of his, who were watching the effect produced by this interview. — His father, satisfied by the admiration he saw in Count Albert's countenance, when they both took off their masks, approached and whispered — “The Countess Christina.” — Count Altenberg grew pale, and for a moment stood in silent consternation. The lady smiled with an air of haughty superiority, which in some degree relieved him, by calling his own pride to his aid, and by convincing him, that tenderness, or feminine timidity,

which he would have most dreaded to wound, were not the characteristics of her mind. — He instantly asked permission to pay his respects to her at her father's palace the ensuing day. — She changed colour — darted a penetrating glance at the Count, and after an incomprehensible and quick alternation of pleasure and pain in her countenance, she replied, that “she consented to grant Count Albert Altenberg that interview, which he and their mutual friends desired,” — She then retired with her friends from the assembly. In spite of the haughtiness of her demeanor, it had been obvious, that she had desired to make an impression upon Count Albert, and all who knew her agreed, that she had never on any occasion been seen to exert herself so much to shine and please. — She shone, but had not pleased. — The father, however, was content; an interview was promised — he trusted to the charms and talents of the Countess; he trusted to her flattering desire to cap-

tivate, and with impatience and confidence he waited for the event of the succeeding day. — Some intervening hours, a night of feverish and agonizing suspense, would have been spared to Count Albert, had he at this time known any thing of an intrigue, an intrigue which an artful enemy had been carrying on, with design to mortify, disgrace, and ruin his house. The plan was worthy of him by whom it was formed. — M. de Tourville — a person, between whom and Count Albert there seemed an incompatibility of character, and even of manner; an aversion openly, indiscreetly shown by the Count, even from his boyish years, but cautiously concealed on the part of M. de Tourville, masked in courtly smiles and a diplomatic air of *perfect consideration*. Fear mixed with M. de Tourville's dislike. — He was aware, that, if Count Albert continued in confidence with the hereditary Prince, he would, when the Prince should assume the reins of government,

become in all probability, his prime minister, and then adieu to all M. de Tourville's hopes of rising to favor and fortune. . . . Fertile in the resources of intrigue, gallant and political, he combined them, upon this occasion, with exquisite address. When the Countess Christina was first presented at Court, he had observed, that the Prince was struck by her beauty; M. de Tourville took every means, that a courtier well knows how to employ, to flatter the taste, by which he hoped to profit. In secret he insinuated into the lady's ear, that she was admired by the Prince. M. de Tourville knew her to be of an aspiring character, and rightly judged, that ambition was her strongest passion. — When once the hope of captivating the Prince had been suggested to her, she began to disdain the proposed alliance with the house of Altenberg; but she concealed this disdain, till she could show it with security: she played her part with all the ability, foresight, and consummate prudence, of which ambition

undisturbed by love, is capable. — Many obstacles opposed her views. — The projected marriage with Count Albert Altenberg, — the certainty, that the reigning Prince would never consent to his son's forming an alliance with the daughter of a subject. — But the old Prince was dying, and the Lady Christina calculated, that till his decease she could protract the time appointed for her marriage with Count Albert. — The young Prince might then break off the projected match, — prevail upon the Emperor to create her a Princess of the empire, and then, without derogating from his rank, or giving offence to German ideas of propriety, he might gratify his passion, and accomplish the fullness of her ambition. Determined to take no counsel but her own, she never opened her scheme to any of her friends, but pursued her plan secretly in concert with M. de Tourville, whom she considered but as an humble instrument devoted to her service. He all the while considering her merely as a puppet,

played by his art to secure at once the purposes of his interest and hatred. He thought he foresaw, that Count Albert, would never yield his intended bride, peaceably to his Prince; he knew nothing of the Count's attachment in England, — the Lady Christina was charming, — the alliance highly advantageous to the house of Altenberg, the breaking off such a marriage, and the disappointment of a passion, which he thought the young Countess could not fail to inspire, would, as M. de Tourville hoped, produce an irreparable breach between the Prince and his favorite. On Count Albert's return from England, symptoms of alarm and jealousy had appeared in the Prince, unmarked by all, but by the Countess Christina, and by the confidant, who was in the secret of his passion.

So far M. de Tourville's scheme had prospered; and from the character of the hereditary Prince, it was likely to succeed in its ultimate view. He was a Prince of good dispositions, but wanting in resolu-

tion and civil courage. Capable of resisting the allurements of pleasure for a certain time, but soon weary of painful endurance in any cause ; with a taste for virtue, but destitute of that power to bear and forbear, without which there is no virtue.—A hero when supported by a stronger mind, such as that of his friend, Count Albert ; but relaxing and sinking at once, when exposed to the influence of a flatterer, such as M. de Tourville. — Subject to exquisite shame and self-reproach, when he had acted contrary to his own idea of right ; yet, from the very same weakness that made him err, disposed to be obstinate in error. M. de Tourville argued well from his knowledge of his character, that the Prince, enamored as he was with the charms of the fair Christina, would not long be able to resist his passion ; and that, if once he broke through his sense of honor, and declared that passion to the destined bride of his friend, he would ever afterwards shun and detest the man

whom he had injured. — All this M. de Tourville had admirably well combined, — no man understood and managed better the weaknesses of human nature, but it's strength he could not so well estimate; and as for generosity, as he could not believe in it's sincerity, he was never prepared for it's effects. The struggles, which the Prince made against his passion, were greater, and of longer duration, than M. de Tourville had expected. If Count Albert had continued absent, the Prince might have been brought more easily to betray him; but his return recalled, in the midst of love and jealousy, the sense of respect he had for the superior character of this friend of his early days: — he knew the value of a friend — even at the moment he yielded his faith to a flatterer. — He could not at once forfeit the esteem of the being who esteemed him most; — he could not sacrifice the interest, and as he thought, the happiness of the man, who loved him best. — The attachment his favorite had shown him, his truth, his con-

finding openness of temper, the pleasure in his countenance, when he saw him first upon his return from England, all these operated on the heart of the Prince, and no declaration of his passion had been made at the time when the appointed interview took place between Count Albert and the Countess Christina at her father's palace. Her friends, not doubting that her marriage was on the eve of its accomplishment, had no scruple, even in that court of etiquette, in permitting the affianced lovers to have as private a conference as each seemed to desire.— The lady's manner was this morning most alarmingly gracious. Count Albert was, however, struck by a difference in her air, the moment she was alone with him, from what it had been, whilst in the presence of her friends. All that he might without vanity have interpreted as marking a desire to please, to show him favor, and to evince her approbation, at least, of the choice her friends had made for her, vanished the moment those

friends withdrew. What her motives might be, Count Altenberg could not guess, but the hope he now felt, that she was not really inclined to consider him with partiality, rendered it more easy to enter into that explanation, upon which he was, at all events, resolved. With all the delicacy due to her sex, with all the deference due to her character, and all the softenings by which politeness can sooth and conciliate pride, he revealed to the Countess Christina the real state of his affections; he told her the whole truth, concluding by repeating the assurance of his belief, that her charms and merit would be irresistible to any heart that was disengaged.

The lady heard him in astonishment, — for this turn of fate she had been wholly unprepared, the idea of his being attached to another had never once presented itself to her imagination, she had never calculated on the possibility that her alliance should be declined by any individual of a family less than royal.

She possessed, however, pride of character, superior to her pride of rank, and strength of mind, suited to the loftiness of her ambition. — With dignity in her air and countenance, after a pause of reflection, she replied,

“ Count. Albert Altenberg is, I find, equal to the high character I have heard of him. — Deserving of my esteem, and confidence, by that which can alone command esteem, and merit confidence, — Sincerity. — His example has recalled me to my nobler self, and he has, in this moment, rescued me from the labyrinth of a diplomatist. — Count Albert’s sincerity — I — little accustomed to imitation — but, proud to *follow* even, in what is good and great, — shall imitate. — Know then, Sir, that my heart, like your own, is engaged. — And that you may be convinced I do not mock your ear with the semblance of confidence, I shall, at whatever hazard to myself, trust to you my secret. — My affections have a high object, — are fixed upon him, whose friend and favo-

rite Count Albert Altenberg deservedly is — I should scorn myself . . . no throne upon earth could raise me in my own opinion, if I could deceive or betray the man, who has treated me with such sincerity."

Relieved at once by this explanation, and admiring the manner in which it was made, mingled joy and admiration were manifest in his countenance; and the lady forgave him the joy, in consideration of the tribute he paid to her superiority. — Admiration was a tribute he was most willing to pay at this moment, when released from that engagement to love, which it had been impossible for him to fulfil.

The Countess recalled his attention to her affairs and to his own — Without his making any inquiry, she told him all that had been done, and all that yet remained to be done, for the accomplishment of her hopes — She had been assured, she said, by one now in the favor and private confidence of the hereditary

Prince, that his inclination for her was, painfully and with struggles, which, in her eyes, made his royal heart worthy her conquest—suppressed by a sense of honor to his friend.

“This conflict would now cease,” Count Albert said, “It should be his immediate care to relieve his Prince from all difficulty on his account.”

“By what means?” the Countess asked.

“Simply by informing him of the truth—as far as I am concerned—Your secret, Madam, is safe—your confidence sacred—Of all that concerns myself—my own attachment, and the resignation of any pretensions that might interfere with his, he shall immediately be acquainted with the whole truth.”

The Countess coloured, and repeating the words “*The whole truth*,”—looked disconcerted, and in great perplexity replied, Count Albert’s speaking to the Prince directly, his immediate resignation of his pretensions, would, perhaps,

defeat her plans. This was not the course she had intended to pursue—far from that which M. de Tourville had pointed out—After some moments' reflection, she said,

“ I abide by the truth——Speak to the Prince——Be it so——I trust to your honor and discretion, to speak to him in such terms as not to implicate me, to commit my delicacy, or to derogate from my dignity—We shall see then whether he loves me, as I desire to be loved——If he does, he will free me, at once, from all difficulty with my friends, for he will speak *en prince*—and not speak in vain——If he loves me not—I need not tell you, Sir, that you are equally free——My friends shall be convinced, that I will never be the bride of any other man.”——

After the explanation with the Lady Christina, Count Albert lost no time; he went instantly to the palace. In his way thither, he was met by one of the pages, who told him the Prince desired

to see him immediately. He found the Prince alone——Advancing to meet him, with great effort in his manner to command his emotion, the Prince said,

“ I have sent for you, Count Albert, to give you a proof, that the friendship of princes is not, in every instance, so vain a thing as it is commonly believed to be. Mine for you has withstood strong temptation——You come from the Countess Christina, I believe, and can measure, better than any one, the force of that temptation——Know, that in your absence it has been my misfortune, to become passionately enamored of your destined bride. But I have never, either by word or look, directly or indirectly, infringed on what I felt to be due to your friendship, and to my own honor. Never did I give her the slightest intimation of my passion, never attempted to take any of the advantages, which my situation might be supposed to give.”

Count Albert had just received the most convincing testimony, corroborating these assertions—he was going to express his sense of the conduct of his Prince, and to explain his own situation, but the Prince went on speaking, with the eagerness of one who fears his own resolution, who has to say something, which he dreads that he should not be able to resume or finish, if his feelings should meet with any interruption.

“And now let me, as your friend and Prince, congratulate you, Count Albert, on your happiness; and, with the same sincerity, I request, that your marriage may not be delayed, and that you will take your bride immediately away from my father’s court. Time will, I hope, render her presence less dangerous; time will, I hope, enable me to enjoy your society in safety: and when it shall become my duty to govern this state, I shall hope for the assistance of your talents and integrity, and shall have

deserved, in some degree, your attachment."

The Count, in the strongest manner, expressed his gratitude to his Prince for these proofs of his regard, given under circumstances the most trying to the human heart. He felt, at this instant, exquisite pleasure in revealing to his Highness the truth, in showing him, that the sacrifice he had so honorably, so generously determined to make, was not requisite; that their affections were fixed on different objects; that before Count Albert had any idea of the Prince's attachment to the Lady Christina, it had been his ardent wish, his determination at all hazards, to break off engagements, which he could not fulfil.

The Prince was in rapturous joy—all his ease of manner towards his friend returned instantly, his affection and confidence flowed in full tide. Proud of himself, and happy in the sense of the imminent danger from which he had

escaped ; he now described the late conflicts his heart had endured, with the eloquence of self-complacency, and with that sense of relief, which is felt in speaking on the most interesting of all subjects to a faithful friend, from whom a secret has been painfully concealed—The Prince now threw open every thought, every feeling of his mind. Count Altenberg rose higher than ever in his favor, not the temporary favorite of the moment—the companion of pleasures—the flatterer of present passion or caprice, but the friend in whom there is certainty of sympathy, and security of counsel—The Prince, confiding in Count Albert's zeal and superior powers, now took advice from him, and made a confidant no longer of M. de Tourville. The very means, which that intriguing courtier had taken to undermine Count Altenberg, thus eventually proved the cause of establishing more firmly his credit—The plain sincerity of the Count, and the generous magna-

nimity of the lady, at once disconcerted and destroyed the artful plan of the diplomatist. M. de Tourville's disappointment, when he heard from the Countess Christina the result of her interview with Count Albert, and the reproaches, which in that moment of vexation he could not refrain from uttering against the lady for having departed from their plan, and having trusted to the Count, unveiled to her the meanness of his character, and the baseness of his designs—She plainly saw, that his object had been not to assist her love, but to gratify his own hate—Not merely to advance his own fortune, that, she knew, must be the first object of every courtier, but “to rise upon the ruins of another's fame”—and this, she determined, should never be accomplished by her assistance, or with her connivance. She put Count Albert on his guard against this insidious enemy.

The Count, grateful to the lady, yet biassed neither by hope of her future

favor, nor by present desire to please, firm in honor and loyalty to the Prince who asked his counsel, carefully studied the character of the Countess Christina, to determine whether she possessed the qualities fit for the high station, to which love was impatient that she should be elevated.—When he was convinced, that her character was such as was requisite to ensure the private happiness of the Prince, to excite him to the attainment of true glory—then, and not till then, he decidedly advised the marriage, and zealously offered any assistance in his power to promote the union. The hereditary Prince about this time, became, by the death of his father, sole master of his actions; but it was not prudent to begin his government with an act in open defiance of the prejudices or customs of his country. By these customs, he could not marry any woman under the rank of a Princess, and the Emperor had been known to refuse con-

ferring this rank, even on favorites of powerful potentates, by whom he had been in the most urgent manner solicited. Count Albert Altenberg stood high in the esteem of the Emperor, at whose court he had spent some time; and his Prince now commissioned him to go to Vienna, and endeavor to move the Emperor, to concede this point in his favor. This embassy was a new and terrible delay to the Count's anxious desire of returning to England. But he had offered his services, and he gave them generously. He repaired to Vienna, and persevering through many difficulties, at length succeeded in obtaining for the Countess the rank of Princess.— The attachment of the Prince was then publicly declared—The marriage was solemnised—All approved of the Prince's choice—All—except the envious, who never approve of the happy.—Count Albert received, both from the Prince and Princess, the highest marks of es-

teem and favor. M. de Tourville, detected and despised, retired from court in disgrace and in despair.

Immediately after his marriage, the Prince declared his intention of appointing Count Albert Altenberg his prime minister; but before he entered on the duties of his office, and the very moment that he could be spared by his Prince, he asked and obtained permission to return to England, to the lady on whom his affections were fixed. The old Count, his father, satisfied with the turn which affairs had taken, and gratified in his utmost ambition, by seeing his son minister of state, now willingly permitted him to follow his own inclination in the choice of a wife. "And," concluded Count Albert, "my father rejoices, that my heart is devoted to an Englishwoman—Having himself married an English lady, he knows, from experience, how to appreciate the domestic merits of the ladies of England; he is prepossessed in their favor. He agrees,

indeed, with foreigners of every nation, who have had opportunities of judging, and who all allow that—next to their own countrywomen—the English are the most charming and the most amiable women in the world.”—

When the Count had finished and had pronounced this panegyric of a nation, while he thought only of an individual, he paused, anxious to know what effect his narrative had produced on Mr. and Mrs. Percy.

He was gratified both by their words and looks, which gave him full assurance of their entire satisfaction.

“ And since he had done them the honor of appealing to their opinion, they might be permitted to add their complete approbation of every part of his conduct, in the difficult circumstances in which he had been placed.— They were fully sensible of the high honor, that such a man as Count Altenberg conferred on their daughter by his preference. — As to the rest they must refer him to Caro-

line herself." Mr. Percy said, with a grave voice, but with a smile, from which the Count augured well, "that even for the most advantageous, and in his opinion the most desirable connexion, he would not influence his daughter's inclinations, Caroline must decide."—

Mr. Percy advised, that the appeal to Caroline should be postponed till the next morning. — The Count was impatient — but Mrs. Percy, who knew that her daughter, though she had commanded her feelings, had been much agitated by his unexpected appearance, prevailed upon him to defer speaking to her till the succeeding day, that she might have an opportunity of relating to her all that they had just heard from the Count; and thus, she said, no time would be lost in preparing Caroline to do him justice. — Count Altenberg could not leave his cause in better hands. The sun was now setting, and not presuming to intrude longer, he retired.

It was remarked by Rosamond, that

he took his way through the winding path down the glen with slow and reluctant steps, very different from the speed, with which an hour before he had struck across the wood, and ascended the hill.

“ My dear mother! tell us all in one word!” exclaimed Rosamond — “ Joy or sorrow?”

“ Joy, my love! — Happiness, beyond our hopes!” cried the delighted mother, opening her arms to receive and embrace both her daughters. — “ Happy mother that I am! — Happy beyond expression!”

“ Deservedly happy, all, and each!” cried Mr. Percy, and with the fervent gratitude of a father’s heart, he thanked God for having blessed him in his family; — “ And,” added he, with a look of chastened pleasure, and that sentiment of true resignation, which always recurred to his mind in moments of great felicity.

“ If there be any future sorrow or calamity in store for me, I am now pre-

pared, and resigned to it, grateful for a long life of happiness, with few, very few touches of adversity—loss of fortune, with such children, we have scarcely felt—I have had no trials—if they are to come, let them come.—After this moment I hope I shall be able to endure as I ought.”—

—“And there must be a great trial for us both—prepared at this moment” said Mrs. Percy—“No joy unmixed with sorrow—At this moment, whilst you hold her to your heart . . . We must remember, that Caroline will soon be no longer amongst us—Rosamond we shall not lose—But, Caroline!”—

Caroline turned away, and burst into tears.

“The first tears her mother ever made her shed”—said Rosamond—“the very first from childhood to this hour!”

“Listen to me, my Caroline,” said Mrs. Percy, sitting down beside her on the bank on which she had sunk.—

“Listen to me, my child . . .”

“Listen, Caroline!” cried Mr. Percy;
“to your father’s stronger voice.”

“And stronger mind”—said Mrs. Percy, looking up to her husband, then rising and leaning upon him as he spoke.

“Caroline!—It must be so—It is the order of nature—We are fond, but not selfish, parents—If your happiness be secured by the sacrifice, we can part with you—And when the time comes—here is your mother, will bear it better, perhaps, than I shall—with all my boast of fortitude—better certainly,” continued Mr. Percy, smiling—“better infinitely, than Rosamond, who, at this instant, thinks us all fools, and stands there, in her secret thoughts convinced, Caroline, that you will do whatever you please with Count Altenberg, make him give up power, Prince, country, and live where and how you choose.”

“That was just what I was thinking,” said Rosamond—“And you will see, that

• What in my secret soul was understood,
His lips shall utter, and his deeds make good.”

Yes, father," continued Rosamond, "you will see, that Caroline will make the Count say and do whatever she pleases — she will make him sacrifice power, fortune, country, all for love."

"No," said Caroline — "I never would ask, never would accept of such sacrifices — he is bound by honor and duty to his Prince and his country, and if I become his wife, his honor becomes mine, his duty mine — However great the sacrifices required, I must be prepared to make them — or — resolve . . ."

To prevent Caroline from dwelling on the alternative, Rosamond turned quickly to her father and mother, and requested to know, if they might hear the result of their long conference with Count Ap-tenberg —

During the repetition of this narrative, Rosamond's eagerness of attention and solicitude were such, that any one . . . any one but Mr. Temple, might have imagined, it was to the history of her own lover she was listening. — She was

charmed to find her prophecies, as she said, accomplished; and that the Count justified all that she had ever believed of his constancy. Rosamond forgot, and Caroline never reminded her, that her belief and her prophecies had varied considerably, at different times, during his absence, and had, some days, been diametrically opposite to what she now fancied they had ever steadily continued. Even of late — very lately — in her pity for poor Lord William — Rosamond, though she would not now allow it, was rather inclined to think Lady Jane Granville in the right, and was disposed to suspect the absent lover in the wrong — Caroline, conscious that she had always done him justice, and rejoiced that she had not mistaken his sentiments, was confirmed now by facts in her favorable opinion of the Count, and her partiality was heightened by the grateful conviction of the steadiness and strength of his attachment.

The next day the Count, with all the

persuasive tenderness and energy of truth and love, pleaded his own cause, and was heard by Caroline with a modest, dignified, ingenuous sensibility, which increased his passion.—Whilst she acknowledged how high he stood in her esteem, she did not attempt to conceal the impressions he had made on her heart; yet he saw the unaffected anguish, she felt at the idea of quitting her parents, her sister, all her family, friends, home, country.—Saw that she dreaded to yield her heart to the promises, the hopes, of the passion, which must, at last, require from her such sacrifices—Sacrifices which, had she contemplated in the commencement of her acquaintance, she said, would have prevented her ever daring to love, but she became attached before she ever thought of these, before she had ever considered Count Altenberg as a man, whom it was probable she should marry.—The very circumstance of his being a foreigner, a traveller, with whom it was likely she would have but a

transient acquaintance, had thrown her heart off its guard; and when she was first wakened to the perception of her own partiality, it was in circumstances, when there seemed little chance of his even wishing to separate her from her friends—As long as the hope of being united to him was faint and distant, so was the fear of the sacrifices that union might demand—but now, the hope, the fear, the certainty, at once pressed on her heart with the most agitating urgency.

The Count soothed, and as far as possible relieved her mind, by the assurance, that though his duty to his Prince and to his father, though all his public and private connexions and interests obliged him to reside for some time in Germany, yet that he could occasionally visit England, that he should seize every opportunity of returning to a country, that he preferred to all others; and, for his own sake, he should cultivate the friendship of her family, as

each individual was, in different ways, suited to his taste, and stood high in his esteem. He might hope, that he had obtained a portion of their regard, and that, with the strong inducements Caroline could hold out to them, they would be prevailed upon, in their turn, to visit the Continent, so that, though separated by distance, she would not be lost to her family; and, perhaps, she might, upon the whole, enjoy more of the society of her friends, though at longer intervals of time, than married daughters often do, who live in the same country with their parents.

Caroline listened with fond anxiety to these hopes; she was willing to believe in promises, which she was convinced were made with entire sincerity; but she dreaded, that Count Altenberg's situation and duties, as a statesman and a minister, would render it impossible that they should be fulfilled. — And a life at court, a life of *representation*, to

say no worse of it . . . would be to her most irksome.

Nothing but the extraordinary merit, joined to the extraordinary powers of pleasing, which Count Altenberg possessed, nothing in short but love, . . . could have vanquished these objections, and have prevailed with Caroline to make these sacrifices — However, when her affections had been wrought to this point, when her resolution was once determined, she never afterwards tormented the man, to whom she was attached, with wavering doubts and scruples; but disdaining affectation and caprice, what she gave was doubly given, from being graciously bestowed; and the value of what she sacrificed was doubly felt — from the dignity and unostentatious generosity, with which that sacrifice was made. — Count Altenberg's promise to his Prince obliged him to return by an appointed time; Caroline wished that time had been

more distant; she would have delighted in spending the spring time of love in the midst of those who had formed till now all the happiness of her life, with her parents, to whom she owed every thing, to whom her gratitude was as warm, as strong, as her affection — with her beloved sister, who had sympathized so tenderly in all her sorrow, and who ardently wished to have some time allowed to enjoy her happiness. — Caroline felt all this, but she felt too deeply to display feeling, — sensible of what the duty and honor of Count Altenberg demanded, she made no hesitation, — asked for no delay. —

The first letters, that were written to announce her intended marriage, were to Mrs. Hangerford, and to Lady Jane Granville. — And it may be recorded as a fact, rather unusual, that Caroline was so fortunate as to satisfy all her friends; not to offend one of her relations by telling any too soon, or too late, of her

intentions. In fact she made no secret, no mystery, where none was required by good sense or propriety. Nor did she communicate under a strict injunction of secrecy to twenty friends, who were afterwards each to be angry with the other for having, or not having told that of which they were forbidden to speak. — The order of precedence in Caroline's confidential communications was approved by all the parties concerned.

Mrs. Hungerford was at Pembroke, with her nieces, when she received Caroline's letter; her answer was as follows,

" MY DEAR CHILD,

I am ten years younger since I read your letter, therefore do not be surprised at the quickness of my motions — I shall be with you at the Hills, in Town, or wherever you are, as soon as it is possible, after you let me know when and where I can embrace you and our dear Count. — At the marriage of my

niece, Lady Mary Barclay, your mother will remember, that I prayed to Heaven I might live to see my beloved Caroline united to the man of her choice — I am grateful that this blessing, this completion of all my earthly hopes and happiness, has been granted to me,

M. ELIZABETH HUNGERFORD."

The answer of Lady Jane Granville came next, —

" Confidential."

" This is the last *confidential* letter I shall ever be able to write to you — for a married woman's letters you know, or you will soon know, become, like all the rest of her property, subject to her husband. Excepting always the secrets of which she was possessed before marriage; which do not go into the common stock; if she be a woman of honor — So I am safe with you, Caroline; and any erroneous opinion I might have formed, or any hasty expressions I may have let drop

about a certain Count, you will bury in oblivion, and never let me see you look even, as if you recollected to have heard them.

“ You were right, my dear, in that whole business; I was wrong, and all I can say for myself is, that I was wrong, with the best possible intentions; I now congratulate you with as sincere joy, as if this charming match had been made by my advice, under my *chaperonage*, and by favor of that *patronage of fashion*, of which I know your father thinks that both my head and heart are full — There he is only half right after all — So do not let him be too proud — I will not allow that my heart is ever wrong, certainly not where you are concerned.

“ I am impatient, my dear Caroline, to see your Count Altenberg. I heard him most highly spoken of yesterday by a Polish nobleman, whom I met at dinner at the Duke of Greenwich's. Is it true, that the Count is to be prime minister of the Empire of * * * The

Duke of Greenwich asked me this question, and I promised I would let his Grace know from *the best possible* authority — But I did not *commit* you.

“ And now, my dear, for my own interest — If you have really and cordially forgiven me, for having so rashly said, upon a late occasion, that I would never forgive you, prove to me your placability and your sincerity — use your all powerful influence, to obtain for me a favor, on which I have set my heart. Will you prevail on all your house to come up to Town directly, and take possession of mine? — Count Altenberg, you say, has business to transact with ministers; whilst this is going on, and whilst the lawyers are settling preliminaries, where can you all be better than with me? I hope I shall be able to make Mr. and Mrs. Percy feel as much at home, in one hour's time, as I found myself the first evening after my arrival at the Hills some years ago.

“ I know the Hangerfords will press

you to go to them, and Alfred and Mrs. A. Percy, will plead *nearest of kin*—I can only throw myself upon your generosity. The more inducements you have to go to other friends, the more I shall feel gratified and obliged, if you favor me with this proof, of your preference and affection. Indulge me, my dear Caroline, perhaps for the last time, with your company, of which, believe me, I have, though a woman of the world, sense and feeling sufficient, fully to appreciate the value—
Yours (at all events), ever and affectionately,

J. GRANVILLE."

Cavendish Square—Tuesday.

"P.S. — I hope your father is of my opinion, that weddings, especially among persons of a certain rank of life, ought always to be *public*;—attended by the friends, and connexions of the families, and conducted with something of the good old aristocratic formality, pomp, and state of former times."

“Lady Frances Arlington has just called to say, she has a vast mind to be bridenmaid — I told her Ladyship that I could settle nothing till you came to Town, ——— Pray come ——— and immediately.” ———

Lady Jane Granville's polite and urgent request was granted. Caroline and all her family had pleasure in showing Lady Jane, that they felt grateful for her kindness. ———

Mr. Temple obtained permission from Lord Oldborough to accompany the Percys to Town; and it was settled that Rosamond and Caroline should be married on the same day.

But the morning after their arrival in London Mr. Temple appeared with a countenance very unlike that, which had been seen the night before — Hope and joy had fled! — All pale and in consternation! — Rosamond was ready to die with terror ——— She was relieved when he declared, that the evil related only to

his fortune. The place that had been promised to him was given, indeed — the word of promise was kept to the ear, but by some management either of Lord Skreene's or Lord Skrimpsire's, the place had been *saddled* with a pension to the widow of the gentleman, by whom it had been previously held; and the amount of this pension was such, as to reduce the profits of the place to an annual income, by no means sufficient to secure independence, or even competence, to a married man — Mr. Temple knew, that, when the facts were stated to Lord Oldborough, his Lordship would, by his representations to the highest authority, obtain redress; but the secretary was unwilling to implicate him in this disagreeable affair, unwilling to trouble his tranquillity again with court intrigues, especially, as Mr. Temple said, where his own personal interest alone was concerned — at any rate this business must delay his marriage. — Count Altenberg could not possibly defer the day named for his

wedding — Despatches from the Continent pressed the absolute necessity of his return. Revolutionary symptoms had again appeared in the city, his Prince could not dispense with his services. His honor was at stake. —

Mr. Temple did not attempt or pretend to bear his disappointment like a philosopher—he bore it like a lover, that is to say, very ill — Rosamond! — poor Rosamond, rallied him with as much gayety, as she could command with a very heavy heart.

After a little time for reflection Rosamond's good sense, which, when called upon to act, never failed to guide her conduct, induced her to exert decisive influence to prevent Mr. Temple from breaking out into violent complaints against those in power, by whom he had been ill treated.

The idea of being married on the same day with her sister, she said, after all was a mere childish fancy, for which no solid advantage should be

hazarded; therefore she conjured Mr. Temple not in a heat of passion to precipitate things, but patiently to wait; — to return and apply to Lord Oldborough, if he should find, that the representations he had already made to Lord Skreene failed of effect — With much reluctance Mr. Temple submitted to postpone the day promised for his marriage, but both Mr. and Mrs. Percy so strongly supported Rosamond's arguments, that he was compelled to be prudent — Rosamond now thought only of her sister's approaching nuptials. Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer arrived in Town, and all Mr. and Mrs. Percy's troops of friends gathered round them for this joyful occasion.

Lady Jane Granville, was peculiarly happy, in finding, that Mr. Percy agreed with her in opinion, that marriages ought to be publicly solemnized, and rejoiced, that, when Caroline should be led to the altar, by the man of her choice, she would feel that choice sanc-

tioned by the approbation of her assembled family and friends——Lady Jane justly observed, that it was advantageous to mark as strongly as possible the difference between marriages with consent of friends, and clandestine unions, which from their very nature must always be as private as possible.—

If some little love of show, and some aristocratic pride of family, mixed with Lady Jane's good sense upon this as upon most other occasions, the truly philosophic will be inclined to pardon her;—for they best know how much of all the principles, which form the strength and happiness of society, depends upon mixed motives.

Mr. and Mrs. Percy, grateful to Lady Jane, and willing to indulge her affection in its own way, gratified her with permission to arrange the whole ceremonial of the wedding.—

Now that Rosamond's marriage was postponed, she claimed first right to be her sister's bridesmaid, Lady Florence

Pembroke, Mrs. Hungerford's niece, had made her request, and obtained Caroline's promise to be the second—and these were all that Caroline desired to have—but Lady Jane Grauville evidently wished for the honor and glory of Lady Frances Arlington for a third, because she was niece to the Duke of Greenwich; and besides, as Lady Jane pleaded,

“ Though a little selfish, she really would have been generous, if she had not been spoiled—to be sure, she cared in general for no one but herself, . . . yet she absolutely showed particular interest about Caroline — *Besides*, her Ladyship had set her heart upon the matter, and never would forgive a disappointment of a fancy.” — Her Ladyship's request was granted. — Further than this affair of the three bridesmaids we know not — there is no record concerning who were the bridemen — But before we come to the wedding day, we think it necessary to mention, for the satisfaction of the prudent part of the world, that

the settlements were duly signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of proper witnesses.

At the moment of recording this fact, we are well aware, that as much as we shall gain in the esteem of the old, we shall lose in the opinion of the young. We must therefore be satisfied with the nod of approbation from parents, and must endure the smile of scorn from lovers. We know that,

“ Jointure, portion, gold, estate,
Houses, householdstuff, or land,
The low conveniences of fate,
Are Greek no lovers understand.”

CHAPTER XL.

WE regret that we cannot gratify some of our courteous readers with a detailed account of the marriage of Caroline and Count Altenberg, with a description of the wedding-dresses, or a list of the company, who, after the ceremony, partook of an elegant collation at her Ladyship's house in Cavendish Square. We lament that we cannot even furnish a paragraph in honor of Count Altenberg's equipage.

After all their other friends had made their congratulations, had taken leave of Caroline, and had departed, Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer still lingered.

"I know, my love," said Mrs. Hungerford, "I ought to resign you, in these last moments, to your parents, your brothers, your own Rosamond. — Yet I have

some excuse for my selfishness — they will see you again, it is to be hoped, often. — But I! — That is not in the course of nature the blessing I scarcely could have expected to live to enjoy has been granted to me. — And now that I have seen you united to one worthy of you, one who knows your value, I am content — I am grateful. — Farewell again and again, my beloved Caroline, may every”

Tears spoke the rest — turning from Caroline, she leaned on Count Altenberg's arm; as he conducted her to her carriage, she could only say,

“You are a happy man, Count Altenberg. Forgive me, if I am not able to congratulate you as I ought . . . Daughter Mortimer! you know my heart . . . Speak for me . . . if you can.”

Count Altenberg was more touched by this strong affection for Caroline, than he could have been by any congratulatory compliments to himself. — After the departure of Mrs. Hungerford and

Mrs. Mortimer came the separation so much dreaded by all the family, for which all stood prepared. Despising and detesting the display of sensibility, they had fortified themselves for this moment with all their resolution, and each struggled to repress their own feelings.

Count Altenberg had delayed till the last moment. It was now necessary, that they should set out. — Caroline, flushed crimson to the very temples one instant, and pale the next, commanded with the utmost effort her emotion. Rosamond, unable to repress hers, clung to her sister, weeping — Caroline's lips quivered with a vain attempt to speak — she could only embrace Rosamond repeatedly, and then her mother — in silence. — She stood motionless, for she had not power to withdraw her cold hand from her mother. — Her father pressed her to his bosom — blessed her — and then drawing her arm within his, led her to her husband.

As they passed through the hall, the faithful housekeeper, and the old stew-

ard, who had come from the country to the marriage, pressed forward, in hopes of a last look. Caroline stopped, and took leave of each. She was able, though with difficulty, to speak, and she thanked them for all the services and kindness she had received from them from childhood to this hour. — Then her father led her on to the carriage.

Oh! if it was not for such a husband as Count Altenberg, I never, never could bear this separation, thought Caroline, as she took leave of her father.

Her foot was now on the step of the carriage, into which Count Altenberg was handing her; when, turning to look once more at her father, two men rudely crossed between them, and an instant afterwards, she saw one of these lay his hand on her father's shoulder, and heard him say the words,

“ Arrest! — Writ! — Prisoner!”

Caroline sprang from the step of the carriage, Count Altenberg opened a way

for her between the sheriff's officers, into the house.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear Caroline. — There is no cause," said her father, in a calm voice. — "This is a great mistake, or great injustice. — In either case, I shall obtain redress."

The writ was shown. — It was taken out at the suit of Sir Robert Percy, and for an enormous sum — the amount of the rents received by Mr. Percy during the whole time he had been in possession of the estate. When that estate was given up to Sir Robert Percy, he had agreed to abandon all claim to these estates, in consideration of improvements, buildings, furniture, and plate, which had been delivered to him without reserve, to an amount then thought equivalent to his demands. But he had lately written, to state, that what he had unwarily been induced to accept as full payment was by no means equal to his right, that the agreement was made

under mistaken information, that it was not legally executed, and that he had directed his solicitor, Mr. Sharpe, to proceed at law for the recovery of the whole of his just debt.

Mr. Percy had not conceived it possible, that even Mr. Sharpe would, without allowing time scarcely for an answer to this demand, take out a writ against him, and have it executed at such a cruel moment.

Count Altenberg, when he understood the nature of this arrest, and as soon as he heard Alfred's name, the necessity of obtaining security for his father, to prevent this imprisonment, instantly came forward.

"As your son, Mr. Percy," said he, "I have a right to speak — a right to hope that my assistance will be accepted. — I have an English property — will that be sufficient security?"

Mr. Percy thanked the Count — and Caroline, by her look, thanked him most tenderly; but her father firmly said, that

he would not involve any of his friends in his difficulties. — The nearer and dearer they were, the more pain it would give him — he had several excellent friends, who would, he was sure, be willing to risk much for him, but, he would not suffer them to hazard so enormous a sum. It was, he said, an evil, but no insupportable evil, to pass some months in prison — he trusted the event would prove that he had been unjustly detained.

Then turning to Caroline, he said, “You know the worst now, my dear daughter; from your strength of mind I expect, in all circumstances, resolution. — The honour of Count Altmberg obliges him to be with his Prince at an appointed time. — Detain him not! — Farewell, my dear daughter.”

Caroline, with the anguish of divided duty and affection, looked from her father to her husband.

“Heaven forbid! that I should separate you at this moment from your father, Caroline,” said the Count. — “Stay.

with him—Heaven forbid! that I should exert the right which the name of husband gives me, to sever the ties of nature! — Stay with your father, dearest Caroline! — My honor safe, my promise fulfilled, I will instantly return, and may we meet in happiness!”

The Count, with a sort of desperate haste, as if he feared his resolution should fail, embraced his wife. — Thus parted the lovers, who, but a few short hours before, thought themselves secure of passing their lives together. — So uncertain is all human felicity!

Caroline, as though she had not been a bride, prepared to accompany her father to prison.

The sheriff's officer, who, in spite of the obduracy of his trade, was touched—observed, that . . . Gentlemen in similar circumstances are usually allowed four and twenty hours at least, to look for bail—that he was willing to permit every indulgence in his power—and though his prisoner must be kept in safe custody

dy, yet that there were houses where he could be accommodated for a day or two, till his friends could see what might be done to settle the matter. — There was no necessity for his going directly to prison.

Lady Jane Granville hearing from the officer, that attorney Sharpe was now in town, proposed that Alfred should go to him immediately, and see what accommodation could be made; but all Mr. Percy's family knew too well the malignant and revengeful nature of this man, to expect that any good could result from this measure; as a lawyer, Alfred pronounced that it would be a dangerous step, as it might be construed into an offer to compromise, and a consciousness of the validity of the claim made by their opponent.

Mr. Percy decidedly disapproved of making any concession, or any application to the vile attorney, and determined, as he had declared, not to permit any of his friends to hazard themselves for him,

he thanked the sheriff's officer for his professed indulgence, but thought it best to go to the prison at first, in which at last he must be confined.

It was settled, that Rosamond and Erasmus should remain with Lady Jane Granville, who had been so dreadfully shocked and terrified by what had happened, that she most wanted their care.

Mr. Percy, his wife and daughter Caroline, then quitted her Ladyship's hospitable and elegant mansion, and were conducted to a very different abode in the King's-Bench. The keeper of this prison, accustomed to see varieties of persons of all ranks, and obliged to form a quick judgment of those who are committed to his custody, was an excellent physiognomist. He was favorably prepossessed by the countenance and demeanor of his prisoner, and by the appearance of the ladies, by whom he was accompanied.—

From the moment they entered, he

treated them with the utmost respect and courtesy, which his habits could command. He gave them the choice and choice of the unoccupied apartments. — Mr. and Mrs. Percy fixed upon a tolerably clean, but very small room, which they preferred, because it had a closet large enough to contain a bed for Caroline. As soon as they were in possession of these rooms, Caroline began to arrange the little furniture they contained, in such a manner, as to make her father and mother as comfortable, as circumstances would admit. — They uttered no complaints. — The gaoler was not used to see people so mild and resigned. His own interest, and the calculation of how much money they were likely to spend with him, were, no doubt, his first considerations, but as far as to dispose him to civility, the manners of his prisoners, at once dignified and gentle, and the cheerfulness of Mr. Percy's temper, certainly operated in their favor.

At night, when the doors were locked, Mr. Percy, looking round him, said with a smile,

“Abstract the idea of being deprived of liberty; except the notion of bolts and bars, turnkeys and gaolers, what is there more terrible in being here, than sleeping in any small lodging in any other part of London?” —

“Except the disgrace,” said Mrs. Percy, sighing.

“Had I brought myself to this situation by any vice, or any folly, I should feel it bitterly,” answered Mr. Percy, “I should sink, perhaps, under the sense of shame. — But, at present, my love, conscious as I am, that no extravagance, no imprudence of purs. has been the cause of our imprisonment, I feel it not as the slightest degradation.” —

This assurance relieved Mrs. Percy's mind from her greatest anxiety. — And this night they slept peaceably, while he, who had thrown them into prison, lay in the best of beds, and best of rooms.

master of Percy-Hall, and of all that wealth could give, yet was unable to close his eyes. — He lay brooding on past and future plans of avarice and malice.

Since his marriage with Miss Falconer, Sir Robert Percy's establishment had become so expensive, as to fret his temper continually; and his tenants had had more and more reason to complain of their landlord, who, when any of his farms were out of lease, raised his rents exorbitantly, to make himself amends, as he said, for the extravagance of his wife. — The tenants, who had ever disliked him, as being the successor and enemy of their own good and beloved landlord, now could not, and attempted not to conceal their aversion. It appeared in a variety of ways, — Sir Robert could hardly stir out, without being made sensible of it, even by the very children at the cottage doors. This renewed and increased the virulence of his dislike to our branch of the Percys, who, as he knew, were always compared to

him and his, who were all idolized, and who seemed indeed to be ever present to the provoking memories of these tenants. — Sir Robert Percy was disappointed hitherto in the hope for which he married, the hope of an heir, who should prevent the estate from returning to those, from whom it had been wrested by his arts. — Envy at seeing the rising and prosperous state of *these Percys*, who, in spite of their loss of fortune, had made their way up again through all obstacles, combined to increase his antipathy to his relations. — He found a willing assistant in Sharpe, the attorney; and they both enjoyed, as much as malevolence can enjoy any thing, the idea of the arrest. — After it was executed, and that Mr. Percy was lodged in prison, they were, however, a little mortified by finding, that their utmost malice had failed to intimidate their victim, or to extort from him any species of submission, or concession; but, on the contrary, that Mr. Percy had retained his

son Alfred immediately to take all the legal steps necessary to obtain redress, and to bring the matter to issue as speedily as possible.

To return to our prisoners, whom we left tranquilly asleep. In the morning, when first they awakened, it was with the feeling that something extraordinary, and painful, had happened; but what had passed the preceding day seemed only as a frightful dream, till the conviction of its reality was impressed upon their minds by the external objects, which first struck their senses:—the meanness of the room, the grated windows, the strange noises they heard in the passages, and from the yard below.—

Caroline, now recollecting every circumstance, rose with a heavy heart, but appeared before her parents with a cheerful countenance;—Whilst she made breakfast, (Oh how unlike the breakfast of the preceding morning!—) she began to calculate when she could hear from

Count Altenberg. — Count Altenberg, whom she scarcely yet ventured to call her husband. —

The gaoler civilly came to offer them newspapers. Caroline opening one, to read it to her father, involuntarily looked first for the foreign news, but her eye was caught by a splendid account of her own marriage, and of Count Altenberg's setting out for the Continent. This prevented her from reading loud for some moments. The next attempt she made was scarcely more successful. All the paragraphs from Germany were calculated to inspire her with the most serious apprehensions.

Count Altenberg had flattered himself from the last despatches from his Court, that the strong measures taken by the Prince would have prevented danger; but the French party had formed new intrigues, — they gained ground. — Every symptom threatened revolution — and, if the newspaper accounts were true, civil war, and foreign invasion, were inevi-

table.—But these might be exaggerated statements.—Caroline endeavored to think so, and to find comfort in the contradictory accounts in other papers of opposite parties.—While she, her father, and mother, were employed in this manner, one of the turnkeys came in, to say, that an old man, Mr. Perez's steward, wished to see him.

The old man was shown in, but when he saw his master, he was quite overcome, and being unable to speak, he stepped behind the turnkey, making his way back into the passage, where he staid some minutes before he could summon sufficient resolution to return.

When he reappeared, his master went towards the door to meet him, and spoke to him kindly; but this nearly over-set him again, and his face worked with strong emotion before he could utter,

"I'm only come, Sir, to see . . . you, before I would go down to the country, on account of not knowing if you, or my

mistress had any orders for me, — or *any at home*."

The word *home*, which he usually pronounced with full English cordiality of emphasis, he could scarcely articulate nor could venture to attempt naming his wife, to whom he could only allude, under the general description of *any at home*. —

Mr. Percy gave him directions, to which he seemed to listen with motionless attention and respect — occasionally answering,

"So best, Sir" — "It shall be done for certain" — "I understand, Sir."

But at last he put his hand to his forehead, and said —

"I am afeard, Sir, to forget all my head's not so clear as it *ought for* this morning . . . if you'd be pleased, if it would not be too troublesome to write me the orders down here in my book, in pen and ink . . . I might be better able to morrow, or when I do get"

Home again stopped him — so he unstrapped his pocket-book; and began to write what his master dictated. — Mr. Percy took the pen from John's hand, which trembled so that he could not get on.

“You had better let me write, my good John.”

“It is badly blotted, indeed, and a shame” — said the old man — “but I am all I don't know how to day, and no better able, nor sensibler like, than a child — I axe your pardon for being so troublesome — I thank you kindly, Sir.”

While his master was writing, John stole a look, which he had never ventured yet, at his mistress and Caroline — and bowed to each — but as to speaking, that was out of the question — for some time — at last he recollected a note Rosamond had given him for his mistress, and laying it down he said, — “Might I make bold to axe, Madam, is it true what the gentleman who let me in was telling on me, that this here place is not

in the nature of our county jails, but that master will have liberty to walk about as he pleases, and only the gates and doors locked at night, like as for any gentleman's own house and place at home — If so be that's true, it would be some comfort."

Mr. Percy stopped writing, to assure him that the information was correct; and he tried still further to raise his spirits, by telling him that some gentlemen, who had been confined in the King's Bench, had been heard to declare they never were happier in their lives.

"Why, with a good conscience, to be sure, there's no saying how happy a man may be any where — And that's a great point, Ma'am, for my master, that's certain" — said the steward, brightening up a little — "But" — his face clouding again, as he looked at the grated windows —

"A prison's a prison, turn it which way one will — and I never thought for

to live to see the day when my master would be in such a place — A gentleman like he, as I have known, boy and man, these forty years, and never knew him to wrong no man, woman, nor child, no how; but quite and clear the contrary, doing good to all, which all can testify — What sort of a heart must he have, that could go for to lay a finger upon him, and at such a time too — but he is a bad man, if ever there was one”

“Don’t talk of him, don’t think of him,” said Mr. Percy.

“So best, Sir,” said John — “And, Sir, if in case there’s any thing else you think of for me to do, I suppose you can write by post — And I may go now?” —

But still he delayed — Moving slowly towards the door he said —

“I wish your honor your health, then, and that, please God, you may be soon down with us again, Sir — My mistress the same — And Miss Caroline” —

The thought that she was no longer

Miss Caroline, again stopped him, and his feelings at last forcing their way fluently into words, he exclaimed,

“What will my poor woman say, when I get home! — She, who is looking to hear of nothing but o’ the wedding and joy — Little guessing, no more than myself, how our Miss Caroline’s wedding-day was to end — Lack-a-day, the bride, too, that I myself see, but yesterday this time, the beautifullest bride that ever was seed, and all the power of ladies and gentlemen wishing of her joy — And here she is, locked up in a prison — the bridegroom gone! — And she might have gone with him, too, in her own carriage, to a palace they say, only that, like an angel as she is and ever was, she would stay to comfort us!”

“Then should not we be comforted, my good John,” said Mr. Percy, smiling — “If I had not been thrown into jail by these wicked men, just at the very moment I was parting from my

daughter, her mother and I should not now have her sitting between us. Come, my good old friend, follow the example of your master — Turn to the bright side of things — bear up under misfortune, and you will feel it lighten surprisingly."

"Ah, master, so you can do for yourself——but I can never do the like for you — It makes me a deal worse, so it does, to see you looking so patient withal, and hear you speaking so cheerful — I can't stand it no longer——so had best take myself away."

John made his bow to all. His master called to one of the turnkeys to show him the way out.

"Lack-a-day! when will he do that for you, dear master, could you give any sort of a guess?"

"Law permitting" — said Mr. Percy, "I hope to be with you at the Hills in a few months."

"Months!" repeated the old man, stopping short — "Then afore that, I shall be dead — But if so it is to be

—— Why, so be it —— God's will be done."

This visit from their steward, though it could not serve immediately to raise the spirits of our prisoner, had something in it consolatory as well as touching.

Alfred was the next person who arrived, and his countenance showed that he brought no good tidings. He had been considering his father's case, and had consulted his friends. As lawyers they had an unfavorable opinion.

Alfred said, that the agreement, which had been entered into between his father and Sir Robert Percy, by which Sir Robert had engaged to relinquish the ~~mesne rents~~, in consideration of the improvements made by Mr. Percy, however just and however binding it would be between men of honor, was no way good in law. — With professional knowledge, and in technical language, Alfred explained to his father, that "no release of the mesne rents, for the six preceding

years, having been executed, an action of trespass for these would lie ; and to this action, which Sir Robert had commenced by the writ under which Mr. Percy was arrested, no valid defence, it was feared, could be made. — Because the judgment and proceedings in the former suit on ejectment, by which Sir Robert obtained possession of the Percy estate, were conclusive evidence to bind Mr. Percy in the present action of trespass."

Alfred added " that both he and Mr. Friend had been examining the record of the judgment, and the return of the writ of *habere*, in hopes of discovering some irregularity, upon which they could ground a defence, but that no error could be detected.

This explanation, unintelligible as it will be to many of our readers, and, as such, incapable of communicating either pain or pleasure, was, alas, too clear to poor Mr. Percy: he perceived, that he had little chance of redress

from law; that the decision, when the cause should come to a hearing, would be against him; and that instead of being liberated, as he had hoped, in a few months, he had no likelihood of ever obtaining his liberty, except by selling The Hills, all the remaining property he had in the world. Whether to do this, or to spend the rest of his days in the King's Bench, was the alternative of evil, which would probably be left for his future consideration.

In the mean time, Mr. Percy, naturally of a cheerful temper, and habitually of that philosophy which forbears to anticipate future evil, turned the whole force of his mind towards making the present as easy and tolerable as possible to himself and his fellow sufferers.

He began to form a settled plan for the occupation of the days he was inevitably doomed to pass in prison, the time that must elapse before the point now in contest could be brought to any

decision favorable or unfavorable. — As soon as they could leave Lady Jane Granville, Rosamond and Erasmus came to join the family-council. Mrs. Percy then arranged with them at what hours he should wish his friends to call upon him, and at what hours he should like to see his family — what time he would give to exercise, and what to literary occupation. — Literature! inestimable resource to the prisoner!

Rosamond was excessively anxious to be permitted to stay with her father, or at least to be allowed in her turn every other week to take the place of Caroline, or of her mother, whose health would be most likely to suffer by continued confinement. As none of this family wanted to vie with each other in generosity, or in demonstrations of affection, all readily consented to do that which was most reasonable, and most likely to be for the general good. It was therefore settled, that every second week either Mrs.

Percy, or one of her daughters, should spend at Alfred's house. — Lady Jane Granville and Mrs. Hungerford had written to beg Mrs. Percy and her daughters would come to their houses whenever they could leave Mr. Percy — but from this they excused themselves, as they wished to live in as retired a manner as possible. To the propriety of this resolution they knew their kind friends must accede.

Their plan once settled, they adhered to it invariably. Their hours and days passed so regularly, that they began to feel as if the ordering of them in a certain manner was the necessary course of life. Some time passed without bringing any change in their circumstances.

Letters arrived from Count Altenberg, which did not tend to put Caroline more at ease. Public affairs indeed were not so desperate as the newspapers had represented them to be — But domestic sorrow awaited him. Very soon after his return,

his father was seized with an illness of so dangerous a nature, that his son could not possibly leave him. — Post after post brought accounts of the progress of the malady, which at last terminated fatally. The death of his father, the funeral, and much business, which respect to his memory required to be performed, detained Count Altenberg. Till at length, when all was arranged, and Caroline had reason to hope that his next letter would announce his setting out, public affairs again demanded delay. The French declared war—their troops were in motion, and it was necessary to prepare for the defence of the country against invasion. Their General boasted, that he would be within the gates of their city, and within the walls of their palace, before the ensuing month should be at an end. In these circumstances, when his Prince and his country required his services, it was impossible that Count Altenberg should desert his post. The letters he wrote to

Caroline breathed the most ardent affection, expressing in different ways this strong sentiment, . . .

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Lov'd I not honor more."

Caroline prepared for the anxiety that must be more or less the lot of the wife of a man in Count Altenberg's public situation, bore it with fortitude, and however it preyed upon her mind, she never uttered any expression of impatience or complaint. Her husband's reputation and her own duty were her first objects; and whatever she suffered in the performance of one, or in the hope of his attaining the other, appeared to her of inferior, and comparatively small importance. — It was not merely in the generous emotion or transitory heroism of the moment, that she offered, when she saw her father arrested, to stay with him and share his imprisonment; she was aware of what she offered, her resolution and affection were sufficient to sustain

her through the protracted sacrifice. Nor did she appear to think it a sacrifice — Never for an instant did she remit those daily, hourly, fond and grateful attentions, which convinced her father, that she did not repent the determination she had made.

Poor Rosamond all this time was suffering also both for her father and for her lover. Mr. Temple was still unable to obtain the performance of the promise which had been made him, of *remuneration*, and of *competent provision*. He had gone through, in compliance with the advice of his friends, the mortification of reiterating vain memorials and applications to the Duke of Greenwich—Lord Skrimshire—Lord Skreene, and Mr. Secretary Cope. The only thing, which Mr. Temple refused to do, was to implicate Lord Oldborough, or to disturb him on the subject. — He had spent some weeks with his old master in his retirement, without once adverting to his own difficulties, still hoping that

on his return to town a promise would be fulfilled, which Lord Skreene had given him, that "the affair should in his absence be settled to his satisfaction." — But on his return to town, his Lordship found means of evasion and delay, and threw the blame on others; the course of memorials and representations was to be recommenced. — Mr. Temple's pride revolted, his love was in despair — and frequently, in the bitterness of disappointment, he reiterated to his friend Alfred, his exclamations of regret and self-reproach, for having quitted from pique and impatience of spirit a profession, where his own perseverance and exertions would infallibly have rendered him by this time independent. — Rosamond saw with sympathy and anguish the effect, which these feelings of self-reproach, and hope delayed, produced on Mr. Temple's spirits and health. — His sensibility, naturally quick, and rendered more acute by disappointment, seemed now continually to draw from all cha-

racters and events, and even from every book he opened, a moral against himself, some new illustration or example, which convinced him more and more of the folly of being a dependant on the great. He was just in this repentant mood, when one morning, at Mrs. Alfred Percy's, Rosamond heard him sigh deeply several times, as he was reading with great attention. She could not forbear asking what it was that touched him so much. — He put the book into her hands, pointing to the following passage — “The whole of this letter *,” said he, “is applicable to me, and excellent, but this really seems as if it had been written for me, or by me.”

She read —

“I was a young man, and did not think that men were to die, or to be turned out * * * * * What was to be done now? — No money, my former pa-

* Letter from Mr. Williams (Secretary to Lord Chancellor West) to Mrs. Williams.

tron in disgrace! friends that were in favor not able to serve me, or not willing; that is, cold, timid, careful of themselves, and indifferent to a man whose disappointments made him less agreeable * *

***** I languished on for three long melancholy years, sometimes a little elated; a smile, a kind hint, a downright promise, dealt out to me from those in whom I had placed some silly hopes, now and then brought a little refreshment, but that never lasted long, and to say nothing of the agony of being reduced to talk of one's own misfortunes and one's wants, and that basest and lowest of all conditions, the slavery of borrowing, to support an idle useless being — my time, for those three years, was unhappy beyond description. What would I have given then for a profession! ***** any useful profession is infinitely better than a thousand patrons."

To this Rosamond entirely acceded, and admired the strong good sense of the

whole letter, but she observed to Mr. Temple, that it was very unjust, not only to himself, but, what was of much more consequence, to *her*, to say that all this applied exactly to his case. — “Did Mr. Temple,” she asked him, “did he mean to insult her, by asserting that she could esteem, or have been near consenting to marry a man, who was an *idle useless being*. No, it was impossible; that any one who had been a mere dependent on great men, and a follower of courts, could ever have recommended himself to her father and her whole family, could ever have been the chosen friend of her brother Alfred.”

Rosamond then, with playfulness of manner, but serious kindness, pleaded Mr. Temple's cause against himself.

“It was true,” she acknowledged, “that this friend of her brother's had made one mistake in early life, but who is there that can say, that he has not in youth or age committed a single error. — Mr. Temple had done one silly thing to be

sure, in quarrelling with his profession ; but he had suffered, and had made amends for this afterwards, by persevering application to literature. There he had obtained the success he deserved. — Gentlemen might sigh and shake their heads, but could any gentleman deny this? Could it be denied, that Mr. Temple had distinguished himself in literature? — Could any person deny, that a political pamphlet of his recommended him to the notice of Lord Oldborough, one of the ablest statesmen in England, who made him his secretary, and whose esteem and confidence he afterwards acquired by his merit, and continued, in place and out, to enjoy? — Will any gentleman deny this? — Rosamond added, that “ in defence of *her brother's friend* she could not help observing, that a man who had obtained the esteem of some of the first persons of their day, who had filled an employment of trust, that of secretary to a minister, with fidelity and credit, who

had published three celebrated political pamphlets, and two volumes of moral and philosophical disquisitions, which, as she heard the bookseller say, were become *stock books*, could not deserve to be called an *idle useless being*. To be born and die would not make all his history. — No : — such a man would at least be secure of honorable mention in the *Biographia Britannica*, as a writer moral — political — metaphysical.”

When Rosamond had, by this defence of Mr. Temple, raised his spirits, and when she had touched his heart by the kindness of her raillery, she seized the moment to urge him to continue his exertions, and not to sink into the idleness of despondency. — She was aware, she said, that while he was in suspense about this promised place, it was difficult to follow steadily any employment; but she also knew, that, if he could interest himself in an occupation in which he could continually advance by his indus-

try, it would afford the best relief to his mind, and would raise him in his own opinion, and in hers. . . .

This last argument especially was so forcible, that from that hour Mr. Temple regularly devoted a portion of every day to a new work, which he had commenced, but which, in the uncertain situation of his affairs, and the anxious state of his heart, he had not had courage to pursue, till Rosamond supplied him with sufficient motive. . . .

Considering Mr. Temple now almost as one of the Percy family, their biographer has thought it not impertinent to continue his history with theirs. . . .

About this time, as if fortune was determined to persist in showing herself averse to those, who had never thoroughly believed in her power, another calamity, which no prudence could prevent, befall them. — Soon after they had received letters from Colonel Gascoigne, giving the most satisfactory account of Godfrey — saying that he had obtained the

highest character among his brother officers, and that he was returning home; just about the time when his father expected to see him came intelligence, that the transport, in which Major Percy's division of the regiment was embarked, had been separated from her convoy by a gale of wind in the night, and it was apprehended, that she had been taken by the enemy. — Godfrey's family hoped for a moment, that this might be a false alarm, but after enduring the misery of reading contradictory paragraphs and contests of the newspaper writers with each other for several successive days, it was at last too clearly established and confirmed by official intelligence, that the transport was taken by a Dutch ship. — Colonel Gascoigne with his division of the regiment arrived safely, and no doubt remained of the misfortune, which had happened to Godfrey. — For some weeks they never heard more of his fate. — This suspense was

dreadful. The Percys have often since declared, that of all they suffered at this period of their lives suspense was the evil, which they found the most difficult to endure. — And each individual of the family was held in anxious uncertainty, for a considerable length of time, on many points the most nearly interesting to their hearts. —

Mr. Percy's son was a prisoner, he knew not in what circumstances. — His son-in-law, Count Altenberg, in the perilous situation of prime minister, in a state threatened with revolution, and certain of immediate invasion. — Caroline's colour fading, and her health beginning to suffer from anxiety. — Rosamond too, with Mr. Temple, fluctuating between hope and fear. — Mr. Percy's own liberty for life depending on the event of a trial, on a point of law, over which neither his character nor his abilities could have any influence, and of which the decision could not be hastened by

any possible exertion he or his family could make.

Suspense may be easily endured by persons of an indolent character, who never expect to rule their destiny by their own genius; but to those, who feel themselves possessed of energy and abilities to surmount obstacles, and to brave dangers, it is torture to be compelled to remain passive, to feel that prudence, virtue, genius, avail them not, that while rapid ideas pass in their imagination, time moves with an unalterable pace, and compels them to wait, along with the herd of vulgar mortals, for the knowledge of futurity.

CHAPTER XLI.

WHAT has become, all this time, of the Falconer family?

Since the marriage of Miss Falconer with Sir Robert Percy, all intercourse between the Falconers and our branch of the Percy family had ceased. But one morning, Alfred was surprised by a visit from Commissioner Falconer. The Commissioner looked thin, pale, and wretched.—He began by condoling with Alfred on their mutual family misfortunes.—Alfred received this condolence with politeness, but with a proud consciousness, that, notwithstanding his father's imprisonment, and the total ruin of fortune with which he was threatened, neither his father, nor any individual in his family, would change places with any one of the Falconers,

since nothing dishonorable could be imputed to Mr. Percy, and since none of his misfortunes were occasioned by any imprudence of his own.

A deep sigh from the Commissioner, at the moment these thoughts were passing in Alfred's mind, excited his compassion, for he perceived that the same reflexions had occurred to Mr. Falconer.

After taking an immoderate quantity of snuff, the Commissioner went on, and disclaimed in strong terms all knowledge of his son-in-law Sir Robert's cruel arrest of his cousin. The Commissioner said, that Sir Robert Percy had, since his marriage with Bell Falconer, behaved very ill, and had made his wife show great ingratitude to her own family—that in Mrs. Falconer's distress, when she and Georgiana were most anxious to retire from town for a short time, and when Mrs. Falconer had naturally looked to the house of her married daughter as a sure asylum, the doors of Percy-Hall had been actually shut against her, Sir

Robert declaring, that he would not be involved in the difficulties and disgrace of a family, who had taken him in to marry a girl without any fortune.

Alfred was perfectly convinced, both from the cordial hatred with which the Commissioner now spoke of his son-in-law, and from Mr. Falconer's disposition, that he had nothing to do with the cruel measures, which Sir Robert had taken against Mr. Percy. Commissioner Falconer was not a malevolent, but a weak man—incapable of being a disinterested friend—equally incapable of becoming a malicious enemy. The Commissioner now proceeded to his own affairs, and to the business of his visit.—He said, that he had been disappointed in all his hopes from the Greenwich party, that when *that sad business of Mrs. Falconer's came out*, they had seized this as a pretence for dropping him altogether—that when they had, by Lord Oldborough's retreat from office, obtained every thing they wanted, and had no

more occasion for *assistance or information*, they had shamefully forgotten or disowned all their former promises to Cunningham. — They had refused to accredit him at the court of Denmark, refused even to defray the expenses of his journey thither, which, in the style he had thought it necessary for an ambassador to travel in, had been considerable. Upon the hopes held out, he had taken a splendid house in Copenhagen, and had every day, for some weeks, been in expectation of the arrival of his credentials. When it was publicly known, that another ambassador was appointed, Cunningham's creditors became clamorous; he contrived to escape from Copenhagen in the night, and was proceeding *incog.* in his journey homewards, when he was stopped at one of the small frontier towns, and was there actually detained in prison for his debts.

The poor Commissioner produced his son's letter, giving an account of his detention, and stating, that, unless the mo-

ney he had raised in Copenhagen was paid, there was no hope of his being liberated. — He must perish in a foreign jail.

We spare the reader the just reproaches which the unhappy father, at this moment, uttered against the son's duplicity. — It was his fate, he said, to be ruined by those, for whom he had been laboring and planning, night and day, for so many years. — “And now,” concluded Mr. Falconer, — “here am I, reduced to sell almost the last acres of my paternal estate . . . I shall literally have nothing left but Falconer-Court, the grounds, and my annuity! — Nothing! — But it must be done, ill as he has used me, and impossible as it is, ever, even at this crisis, to get the truth from him. . . I must pay the money—he is in jail, and cannot be liberated without this sum—I have here, you see, under the hand of the chief magistrate, sufficient proof . . . I will not, however, trouble you, my dear Sir, with showing more of these

letters.—Only it is a comfort to me to speak to one, who will listen with some sympathy . . . Ah! Sir, when out of place! . . . out of favor! . . . selling one's estate! . . . how people change!—But, I am taking up your time.—Since these lands are to be sold, the sooner, the better.—Your father, you know, is trustee to my marriage settlements, and, I believe, his consent, his signature, will be necessary—will it not?—I am no lawyer—I really am not clear what is necessary—and my solicitor, Mr. Sharpe, I have dismissed—perhaps, you will allow me to put the business into your hands.”—

Alfred undertook it, and kindly told the Commissioner, that if he would send him his papers, he would, without putting him to any expense, look them over carefully—have all the necessary releases drawn—and make his title clear to any purchaser who should apply.

The Commissioner, was full of gratitude for this friendly offer, and immedi-

ately begged, that he might leave his title deeds with Alfred. Accordingly the servant was desired to bring in the box, which he had left in the carriage. — The Commissioner then rose to take leave, but Alfred begged he would stay, till he had written a list of the deeds, as he made it a rule never to take charge of any papers, without giving a receipt for them. The Commissioner thought this “a superfluous delicacy between friends and relatives;” but Alfred observed, that relations would, perhaps, oftener continue friends, if in matters of business they took care always to be as exact as if they were strangers.

The Commissioner looked at his watch — said he was in haste—he was going to wait upon Lord somebody, from whom, in spite of all his experience, he expected something.

“You will find a list of the deeds, I have a notion,” said he, “in the box, Mr. Alfred Percy, and you need only sign it — that will be quite sufficient.”

“ When I have compared the papers with the list I will sign it,” said Alfred, — “ my clerk and I will do it as quickly as possible.” —

The Commissioner, secretly cursing Alfred's accuracy, and muttering something of the necessity for his own punctuality, was, however, obliged to submit. — He sat down — the clerk was sent for. — the box was opened. — The list of the papers was, as Alfred found, drawn out by Buckhurst Falconer; and the Commissioner now recollected the time, “ Just when poor Buckhurst,” said the father, with a sigh — “ was arguing with me, against going into the church — At that time I remember he was desperately in love with your sister Caroline.” —

—— “ Why, in truth,” said Alfred, smiling, as he read over the scrawled list, “ this looks a little as if it were written by a man in love — Here's another reason for our comparing the papers and the list.”

“ Well—well—I took it all upon trust,

I am no lawyer—I never looked at them—never opened the box, and am very sorry to be obliged to do it now.”—

The essential care, either of papers or estate, the Commissioner had evermore neglected, while he had all his life been castle-building, or pursuing some phantom of fortune at court. Whilst Alfred was comparing the papers and the list, the Commissioner went on talking of the marriage of Caroline with Count Altenberg, asking when they expected the Count to return, or when Caroline would go to him. It was possible, that Count Altenberg might be moved to make some remonstrance in favor of Cunningham; and a word or two from him to the Duke of Greenwich would do the business.—The Commissioner longed to hint this to Alfred, but Alfred was so intent upon these bundles of parchment, that till every one of them was counted, it would be in vain to make the attempt. So the Commissioner impatiently stood by, while the clerk went on calling over

the papers, and Alfred, in equal strains, replying —

“ Thank Heaven ! ” said he to himself, “ they have got to the last bundle.”

“ Bundle eighteen,” cried the clerk,

“ Bundle eighteen ” — replied Alfred — “ How many numbers does it contain ? ”

“ Six ” — said the clerk. —

“ Six ! — no, seven, if you please,” said Alfred.

“ But six in the list, Sir.”

“ I will read them over,” said Alfred.

“ Number one, Deed of Assignment to Filmer Griffin, Esq. No. 2. Deed of Mortgage to Margaret Simpson, widow. No. 3. Deed of Lease and Release. No. 4. Lease for a Year.”

“ No. 4. no such thing Stop, Sir, Deed ! ”

Alfred gave one look at the paper, and starting up, snatched it from the hands of his clerk, with an exclamation of joy — rang the bell — ordered a coach to be called instantly — then signed the

receipt for the Commissioner, put it into his hands — locked the box; and all was done with such rapidity, that the Commissioner had neither time to recover from his surprise, nor to express his curiosity.

Whilst the coach was coming to the door, Alfred being now a little more composed, explained — It was Sir John Percy's Deed — the long lost Deed — the loss of which had deprived his father of his estate — and of his liberty.

Buckhurst Falconer, it seems, had, by mistake, put it into this box; the Commissioner now recollected, that several of Mr. Percy's papers had been lying on the table at the time Buckhurst was packing these up, and he had been charged not to mix them — But he was careless and in love — Alfred, at that time, was not in the country, and the Deed had never been thought of, or missed, till the night of the fire at Percy-Hall. — And then, after the most diligent search, it was concluded, that it

must have been consumed in the flames. — Alfred could not stay to listen either to the Commissioner's congratulations, or to his apologies for Buckhurst's carelessness, but hurried away to be the bearer of the joyful tidings to his father, mother, and Caroline.

Rosamond and his wife he put into the coach with him, and drove off, telling them they would see presently where they were going, and for what. — All the way Rosamond exercised her ingenuity in vain, trying to find out her brother's purpose. When they arrived within sight of the King's-Bench-prison; her imagination went beyond the truth, and she was sure that Alfred had obtained an order *some way or other*, for her father's release. Alfred, provoked by her imagining something beyond the reality, represented to her the absurdity, the impossibility of her supposition; and that, in England, there is no obtaining any *order* to supersede the course of law. Rosamond's next guess

was, if not a legal, a moral impossibility. She fancied, that Sir Robert Percy had relented, and that he had sent his father-in-law, Commissioner Falconer, to make terms with Alfred, and to grant her father release.—To this one point of her father's release all her ideas tended, but she could get no further.

The moment Mr. Percy saw his son, he said—“Alfred, I am sure, by your countenance, that you have some good news to tell me.”

Caroline and Mrs. Percy, almost at the same moment, repeated the same thing.

Alfred answered, by producing Sir John Percy's deed, which he quietly laid down on the table before his father, telling him how it had been found—A few minutes Alfred staid to hear the exclamations of joy, then suddenly snatched up his hat, and said, “I must leave you, or, after all, I may be the cause of my father's being detained some months longer in prison——No, my dear

Rosamond, I can't stay — Term begins next week — not a moment to be lost — can't explain, you would not understand my lawyer-reasons — Good by — God bless you all — happier faces I never saw."

Alfred wrote immediately to Sir Robert Percy, informing him, "that Sir John Percy's deed was found, that it should be shown to whoever he should send to Alfred's house to see it." — He added, "that he trusted Sir Robert would, when he should be satisfied of the existence, and identity of the deed, stop his present proceedings, and release Mr. Percy; as a continuance of the suit could only ultimately increase the costs and damages, which, in the event of a new trial, must fall entirely, and heavily, upon Sir Robert."

No answer was received for some days from Sir Robert; Mr. Sharpe, his Solicitor, called, however, on Alfred, and in his presence — for Alfred would not let it out of his hands — examined the deed — noted down in his pocket-book the

date, names of the witnesses, and some other particulars, of which, he observed, it was necessary he should inform Sir Robert, before he could be satisfied as to the identity of the conveyance——Sharpe was particularly close and guarded in his looks and words during this interview; would neither admit nor deny that he was satisfied, and went away, leaving nothing certain, but that he would write to Sir Robert.——Alfred thought he saw, that they meant to avoid giving an answer, in order to keep possession and detain his father prisoner some months longer; till another term. He took all the necessary steps to bring the matter to trial immediately, without waiting for any answer from Sir Robert——No letter came from him, but Alfred received from his Solicitor the following note:

"SIR,

"I am directed by Sir Robert Percy, to acquaint you, in reply to yours of the 20th instant, that conceiv-

ing his title to the Percy estate to be no way affected by the instrument to which you allude therein, he cannot withdraw his present suit for the mesne rates.

“ Sir Robert Percy has ordered me, as his Solicitor, to take defence against your ejectment, stating to be, for the recovery of aforesaid lands — forthwith,

And am, Sir,

your humble servant,

A. SHARPE.”

Wednesday.”

Alfred was surprised, disappointed, and alarmed, by this answer — for he had imagined, that their utmost malice could only have attempted to prolong the period of his father's imprisonment, by continuing the present suit, which must, as he had thought, fall to the ground, in consequence of the recovery of the deed — But the idea of their taking defence, and standing a new trial against this deed, had never occurred to him as possible even to their effrontery in val-

lainy — He consulted Mr. Friend, who, after considering Sharpe's letter, could not devise what defence they intended to make, as the deed, upon most accurate examination, appeared duly executed, according to the provision of the statute of frauds. Upon the whole, Mr. Friend was of opinion, that the letter was meant merely to alarm the plaintiffs, and to bring them to offer or consent to a compromise. In this opinion Alfred was confirmed the next day, by an interview with Sharpe, accidental on Alfred's part, but designed and prepared by the Solicitor, who watched Alfred as he was coming out of the Courts, and dogged him till he parted from some gentlemen, with whom he was walking, then joining him, he said, in a voice which Mr. Allscrip might have envied for its power of setting sense at defiance ;

“ I am happy, Mr. Alfred Percy, to chance to see you to day . . . for, with a view to put an end to litigation and dif-

difficulties, I had a few words to suggest — premising, that I do not act or speak now, in any wise, as or for Sir Robert Percy, or with reference to his being my client, nor as a solicitor in this cause — be it understood, but merely and solely as one gentleman to another, upon honor — and not bringing forward any idea to be taken advantage of hereafter, as tending to any thing in the shape of an offer to compromise, which, in a legal point of view, you know, Sir, I could not be warranted to hazard for my client, and of consequence, which I hereby declare, I do not in any degree mean.”

“Would you be so good, Mr. Sharpe, to state at once what you do mean — for I confess I do not, in any degree, understand you.”

“Why then, Sir, what I mean is; simply, and candidly, and frankly, this, that if I could, without compromising the interest of my client, which, as an honest man, I am bound not to do or

appear to do, I should wish to put an end to this litigation between relations; and though your father thinks me his enemy, would convince him to the contrary, if he would allow me, and could point out the means of shortening that confinement, which has occasioned so much scandal; and moreover, could devise an accommodation, which might be agreeable to both parties, and save you a vast deal of trouble and vexation; possession," added he, laughing, "being nine tenths of the law." —

Mr. Sharpe paused, as if hoping that something would now be said by Alfred, that might direct him whether to advance or recede; but Alfred only observed, that the end Mr. Sharpe proposed to himself by speaking, was to be understood, and that this desirable end he had not yet attained.

"Why, Sir, in some cases, one cannot venture to make one self understood any way but by innuendoes." —

"Then, good morning to you, Sir,

you and I can never understand one another."

"Pardon me, Sir, unless you are in a hurry," cried Mr. Sharpe, catching Alfred by the button, "which (when so large an estate, to which you might eventually succeed, and your father's liberty moreover are in question) you are too much a man of feeling, and a man of business to be—In one word then, for I won't detain you another moment, and I throw myself open, and trust to your honor."

"You do me honor."

"Put a parallel case.—You plaintiff A——, I defendant B——, I should, if I were A——, but no way advising it, being B——, offer to divide the whole property; and that the offer would be accepted, I'd engage upon my honor, supposing myself witnessing the transaction, only just as a gentleman."

"Impossible, Sir," cried Alfred, with indignation. "Do you take me for a

fool? Do you think I would give up half my father's estate, knowing that he has a right to the whole?—It is true we are anxious, to see my father released from that prison into which he has been unjustly and cruelly thrown, but, be assured, Sir, that though we, his children, would think no price that we could pay too great, to purchase his liberty, even a few months sooner than the course of law will give it to him, yet, he would never permit me to make such a sacrifice, as that which you propose.”

“Propose . . . pardon me, Sir—I proposed nothing—far from it—only suggested an A. B. case—But one word more, Sir,” cried Mr. Sharpe, holding Alfred, who was breaking from him,—“for your own . . . your father's interest,—you see this thing quite in a wrong point of view, when you talk of a few months more or less imprisonment, and delay of getting possession, being all there is between us,—Depend upon it, if it goes to trial, you will never get possession.”

"Then Sir, if you think so, you are betraying the interest of your client, in advising me not to let it go to trial."

"Good God, Sir! but that is between you and me only."

"Pardon me Sir, it is between you and your conscience." —

"Oh, if that's all! — My conscience is at ease, when I'm trying to prevent the scandal of litigation between relations Therefore, just let me mention to you for your private information, what I know Sir Robert would not wish to come out before the trial."

"Don't tell it to me Sir — I will not hear it — Excuse me," cried Alfred, — breaking from him, and walking on very fast.

Faster still Sharpe pursued, — "you'll remember Sir at all events, that what has been said is not to go further, — you'll not forget." —

"I shall never forget, that I am a man of honor Sir," — said Alfred. —

Sharpe parted from him muttering.

“ that if he lived to the day of trial, he would repent this.”

“ And if I live to the day of judgment, I shall never repent it,” thought Alfred.

Now fully convinced, that Sir Robert desired a compromise, and wanted only to secure, whilst in possession, some portion of that property, which he knew the law would ultimately force him to relinquish; Alfred persevered in his course, freed from the alarm into which he had been thrown, when he first learned that his opponents intended to take defence. — Alfred felt assured, that they would never let the matter come to trial — But time passed on, and they still persisted — A hint was given to Alfred, by one of his father's old tenants But we will not forestal this part of the story. —

Whilst Alfred was comparing various reports and suspicions, calculating moral and legal possibilities, and preparing for the decisive day of trial, the following letter arrived from Godfrey.

“Dear father, mother, brothers, sisters, all! I hope, you are not under any anxiety about me, for here I am safe and sound, and in excellent quarters, at the house of Mynheers Grinderweld, Groensveld, and Slidderschild, Amsterdam—the Dutch merchants who were shipwrecked on our coast years ago—If it had happened yesterday, the thing could not be fresher in their memories—My dear Rosamond, when we laughed at their strange names, square figures, and formal advice at parting, to apply to them if ever we should in the changes and chances of human events be reduced to distress, we little thought, that I a prisoner should literally come to seek shelter at their door.—And most hospitably have I been received—National prejudices, which I early acquired, I don't know how, against the Dutch, made me fancy that a Dutchman could think only of himself, and would give nothing for nothing. I can only say from experience, I have been as hospi-

tably treated in Amsterdam, as ever I was in London. These honest merchants have overwhelmed me with civilities and substantial services, and still they seem to think, they can never do enough for me — I wish I may ever see them on English ground again — But we have no Percy-Hall to receive them in now, and as well as I remember the Hills, we could not conveniently stow more than one at a time — Side by side as they stood after breakfast, I recollect, at Percy-Hall, they would fill up the parlor at the Hills. —

“I have reason to be in high spirits to day, for these good people have just been telling me, that the measures they have been taking to get my exchange effected have so far succeeded, they have reason to believe, that in a week or a fortnight at farthest, I shall be under way for England.

“In the mean time, you will wonder perhaps how I got here — for I perceive that I have subjected myself to Rosa-

mond's old reproach of never beginning my story at the beginning — My father says, half the mistakes in the conduct of human affairs arise from our *taking for granted*; but I think I may take it for granted, that either from the newspapers, or from Gascoigne, who must be in England before this time, you have learned, that the transport I was on board, with my division of the regiment, parted convoy in the storm of the 18th, in the night, and at day break fell in with two Dutchmen. — Our brave boys fought, as English sailors always do But it is all over now, and it does not signify prosing about it — Two to one was too much — we were captured. I had not been five minutes on the Dutchman's deck, when I observed one of the sailors eyeing me very attentively. — Presently he came up and spoke to me, and asked, if my name was not Percy, and if I did not recollect to have seen him before — He put me in mind of the shipwreck, and told me he was one of the sailors, who

were *harboured* in one of my father's out houses, whilst they were repairing the wreck—I asked him what had become of the drunken carpenter, and told him the disaster that ensued in consequence of that rascal's carelessness—My sailor was excessively shocked at the account of the fire at Percy-Hall, — he thumped his breast, till I thought he would have broken his breast-bone; and after relieving his mind, by cursing and swearing in high Dutch, low Dutch, and English, against the drunken carpenter, he told me, that there was no use in saying any more, for that he had punished himself.——He was found dead one morning behind a barrel, from which in the night he had been drinking spirits surreptitiously with a straw!—Pray tell this to our good old steward, who used always to prophecy, that this fellow would come to no good—Assure him however at the same time, that all the Dutch sailors do not deserve his maledictions. Tell him, I can answer

for the poor fellow who recognised me, and who during the whole passage never failed to show me and my fellow prisoners, down to the lowest soldiers of the regiment, every little attention in his power. When we got to Amsterdam, it was he reminded me of the Dutch merchants, told me their names, which, without his assistance, I might have perished before I could ever have recollected, showed me the way to their house, and never rested, till he saw me well settled.

“ You will expect from me some account of this place, . . . — you need not expect any, for just as I had got to this line in my letter, appeared one who has put all the lions of Amsterdam fairly out of my head — Mr. Gresham! — He has been for some weeks in the country, and has just returned. — The Dutch merchants not knowing of his being acquainted with my family, had never mentioned him to me — or me to him. — So our surprise at meeting was great — and mutual — what pleasure it is in a foreign

country, and to a poor prisoner, to see any one from dear England—and one who knows our own friends. I had never known Mr. Gresham myself, but you have all by your letters made me well acquainted with him—I like him *prodigiously*,—to use a lady's word—(not yours, Rosamond)—Letters from Mr. Henry were waiting for him here—He has just opened them, and the first news he tells me is, that Caroline is going to be married—Is it possible?—Count Altenberg!—The last time I heard from you, you mentioned nothing of this? Some of your letters must have been lost—Pray write again immediately, and do not take it for granted, that I shall be at home before a letter can reach me, but give me a full history of every thing up to the present moment—How I wish I was with you!—Groensveld is sealing his letters for London, and says, he must have mine now or never—Adieu—Pray write fully—you can't be too minute for

a poor prisoner! — Yours affectionately,
burning with curiosity, —

G. PERCY."

It was fortunate that Mr. Henry's letters had been sent before Caroline's wedding; as it prevented Godfrey's knowing any thing of the melancholy confusion of that day, and of the imprisonment of his father. — While his family were debating, whether they should or should not comply with his request of writing him a full account of all things, a letter arrived from Mr. Gresham to Mr. Henry, with information, that Godfrey's exchange had been actually effected, and that he had just secured his passage on board a vessel for England, which would sail the ensuing week; no letter therefore could possibly reach him before he should quit Amsterdam.

In a *committee of dates*, held by the whole family — Rosamond exclusive, — who never knew any thing about dates,

it was settled, that, wind and weather permitting, Godfrey would arrive just about the time, when the trial was to come on.

This somewhat encreased Alfred's anxiety for the event. Other circumstances also contributed to raise it to the highest pitch.

Lord Oldborough, surprised at neither seeing Mr. Temple, nor hearing from him, of his marriage, wrote to inquire what delayed his promised return to Clermont-Park. Taking it for granted, that he was married, his Lordship, in the most polite manner, begged "that he would prevail upon his bride, to enliven the retirement of an old statesman by her sprightly company—As the friend of her father he made this request, with a confidence in her hereditary disposition to show him kindness."

In reply to this letter, Mr. Temple told his friend and master what had delayed his marriage, and why he had hitherto forbore to trouble him on the

subject. — Lord Oldborough, astonished and indignant, uttered once, and but once, contemptuous exclamations against the “Inconceivable meanness of Lord Skrimpsire,” and the “infinitely small mind of his Grace of Greenwich.”— Then, without condescending to any communication with inferior powers, his Lordship applied directly to the highest authority. The consequence was, that a place, double the value of that which had been promised to his secretary, was given to Mr. Temple, with apologies for the delay, which, as “Mr. Secretary Cole had it in command to assure his Lordship, had arisen solely from the anxious desire of Ministers, to mark their respect for his Lordship’s recommendation, and their sense of Mr. Temple’s merit, by doing more than had been originally proposed. — An opportunity, for which they had impatiently waited, had now put it in their power to evince the sincerity of their intentions in a mode, which, they trusted, would prove

to the entire satisfaction of his Lordship."

The greatest care was taken, both in substance and manner, to gratify Lord Oldborough, whose loss had been felt, and whose value had, upon comparison, increased in estimation. Mr. Temple was immediately put in possession of his place, and he had the additional pleasure of feeling, that the delicacy with which he had refrained from complaint, and the patience with which he endured suspense, were estimated by his noble friend and master. Rosamond was rewarded by seeing the happiness of the man she loved, and hearing him declare, that he owed it to her prudence.

"Rosamond's prudence!—Who ever expected to hear this?" Mr. Percy exclaimed — "And yet the praise is just — So, henceforward none need ever despair of grafting prudence upon generosity of disposition and vivacity of temper."

Mr. Temple obtained from Rosamond

a promise to be his, as soon as her father should be released from his prison; till then, she could not think of leaving him.

Alfred heard this promise repeated with silent agony of mind. — “The happiness of all who are most dear to me at stake — How much depends on the event of this trial!”

Next came letters from Count Altenberg — Briefly — in the laconic style of a man who is pressed at once by sudden events and strong feelings, he relates, that “at the siege of the city of * * * * by the French, early in the morning of the day on which it was expected that the enemy would attempt to storm the town, his Prince, while inspecting the fortifications, was killed by a cannon-ball, on the very spot where the Count had been standing but a moment before. — All public affairs were changed in his country by the death of the Prince — His successor, of a weak character, was willing to purchase present ease, and to

secure his low pleasures, at any price — ready to give up the honor of his country, and to submit to the conqueror. — That he had been secretly intriguing with the enemy had been suspected; and this suspicion was confirmed by his dastardly capitulation, when the means of defence were in his power, and the spirit of his people eager for resistance.

“With indignation, heightened by grief, contrast, and despairing patriotism — Count Altenberg had remonstrated — in vain — had refused, as minister, to put his signature to the capitulation — had been solicited urgently to concede — offers of wealth and dignities pressed upon him — These he rejected with scorn — Released from all his public engagements by the death of his friend the late Prince, and by the retiring of the Princess from Court, Count Altenberg refused to act as minister under his successor — and seeing that, under such a successor to the Government, no means of serving, or saving the country re-

mained, he at once determined to quit it for ever. Resolved to live in a free country, already his own half by birth, and wholly by inclination, where he has property sufficient to secure him independence, sufficient for all his own wishes, and for the still more moderate desires of the woman he loves. Where he can enjoy, better than on any other spot now in the whole compass of the civilised world, the blessings of real liberty, and of domestic tranquillity and happiness."

His decision made, it was promptly executed — He left to a friend the transacting the sale of that part of his German property, of which he had not already disposed, and concluded his letter to Caroline thus,

"Passports obtained! — Every thing done but to pay my duty to the Princess before I leave the country — Early next week I shall set out for England — May the cloud, which hung over your father when we parted, my beloved Caroline,

be dissipated! May we meet in perfect happiness!"

Caroline's eyes involuntarily turned on Alfred as she read the last words — It was only by strong effort and habitual command of mind, that he could preserve his self-possession under the action of such desperately strong motive, and the sense of such deep responsibility. — Many of his brother lawyers were not only doubtful, but more inclined to despond than to encourage him as to the event of the trial — Several regretted, that he had not accepted of Mr. Sharpe's offered compromise. "Half the estate certain, and his father's release from all difficulties, they thought was too good an offer to have been rejected!" — he might, "as Sharpe had prophesied, live to repent his rejection of that proposal."

Others observed, that though Mr. Alfred Percy was certainly a young man of great talents, and had been successful at the Bar, yet still he was a *young*

lawyer. — It was a bold and hazardous, not to say rash thing, to take upon himself the conduct of a suit against such opponents as Sharpe, and Sir Robert Percy — practised in law — hardened in iniquity — and now driven to desperation.

Mr. Friend was the only man, who stood steadily by Alfred, and never wavered in his opinion — “Trpst to truth and justice,” said he, — “You did right not to compromise — Be firm — If you fail, you will have this consolation, you will have done all that man could do to deserve success.” —

— The day of trial approached. —

Mr. Friend had hoped, till very late in the business, that the object of their adversaries was only to intimidate, and that they would never let it go to trial — Now it was plain they would — But on what grounds? — Again and again Mr. Friend and Alfred perused and reperused Sir John Percy's deed, and examined the opinions of counsel of the first eminence. — Both law and right appeared to be clearly on

their side ; but it was not likely, that their experienced opponents should persist without having some strong resource.

A dread silence was preserved by Sir Robert Percy and by Mr. Solicitor Sharpe. — They must have some deep design ; what it could be remained to be discovered even till the day of trial.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE day of trial arrived — The trial came on about three o'clock in the evening. The court was uncommonly crowded. The friends of Mr. Percy, the adherents of Sir Robert, appeared on opposite sides of the galleries. Sir Robert's adherents boasting loud of his certainty of success, and spreading all manner of false and abusive reports of Alfred and Mr. Percy, whose friends, mean time, preserved a dignified silence — Neither Godfrey nor Count Altenberg had arrived in England; among the spectators, the only person of Mr. Percy's family who was present was

Erasmus, who, being pointed out as the son of the Mr. Percy that was in prison, interested every body in his favor by his excellent countenance and gentleman-like demeanor, all which were contrasted with the dark inauspicious physiognomy of Sir Robert, who sat opposite to him, and who was never tranquil one second — but was continually throwing notes to his counsel, beckoning or whispering to his attorney — while convulsive twitches of face and head — snuff-taking — and handkerchief spread frequently, to conceal the expression of his countenance, betrayed the malignant flurry of his spirits.

Alfred conducted his father's cause in the most judicious and temperate manner. An attempt had been made by Sir Robert, to prejudice the public against Mr. Percy, by representing him as the descendant of a younger brother, who was endeavoring to dispossess the heir of the elder branch of the family of that

estate, which belonged to him by right of inheritance. Alfred's first care was to put the court and the jury in full possession of the facts. He stated that, —
“His father, Lewis Percy, plaintiff in this cause, and Robert Percy, Bart. defendant, both descended from Sir John Percy, who was their grandfather. Sir John outlived both his sons, who left him two grandsons, Robert was the son of his eldest, and Lewis of his youngest son. — Sir John had two estates, one of them paternal, which went in the ordinary course of descent to the representative of the eldest son, being the present Sir Robert Percy. Sir John's other estate, in Hampshire, which came to him by his wife, he conveyed, a short time before his death, to his youngest grandson, the present Lewis Percy, who had held undisturbed possession of it for many years. — But, in process of time, Sir Robert Percy ruined himself by play, and having frequent intercourse with

Sharpe, the solicitor, upon some great emergency inquired whether it was not possible to shake the title of his cousin Mr. Percy's estate. He suggested, that the conveyance might not be forthcoming; but Sir Robert assured him, that both his grandfather and the present Mr. Percy were men of business; and that there was little likelihood either that the deeds should be lost, or that there should be any flaw in the title.—Afterwards a fire broke out at Percy-Hall, which consumed that wing of the house, in which were Mr. Percy's papers.—The papers were all saved except this deed of conveyance. Mr. Sharpe accidentally overhearing the exclamation of Miss Percy, when she thought she had recovered the deed, was apprised of the loss, and conveyed the intelligence to Sir Robert. He immediately commenced a suit against his cousin, and had finally succeeded in obtaining a verdict in his own favor, and possession of the Hampshire estate.—At the time when Mr. Percy

delivered up possession and quitted Percy-Hall, in consideration of the extensive improvements which he had made, and in consideration of his giving up to Sir Robert, plate, furniture, wine, horses, and equipages, Sir Robert had promised to forego whatever claim he might have upon Mr. Percy, for the rents which he had received during the time he had held the estate—But, afterwards, Sir Robert repented of having made this agreement, broke his promise, took out a writ against his cousin for the *mesne rates*, had him arrested for the debt, and thrown into prison. — Unable to pay the immense sum claimed from him, and determined not to involve his friends by accepting of their security, Mr. Percy had little probability of ever being released, till, by fortunate circumstances, which it is needless here to recapitulate, the lost conveyance was recovered; Sir Robert, apprised by him of the recovery of this deed, still persisted in holding possession of the Hamp-

shire estate, and in detaining his cousin in prison for the *mesne rates*. The present action was in consequence brought by Mr. Percy for the recovery of his liberty, and his property." —

Not one word of invective, of eloquence, of ornament, or of any attempt at pathos, did our barrister mix with this statement. It was his object to put the jury, and the court, clearly in possession of facts, which, unadorned, he knew would appear stronger, than if encumbered by any flowers of oratory.

Having produced the deed, conveying the Hampshire estate to his father, Alfred called evidence to prove the signature of Sir John Percy, and the hand-writing of the witnesses. He further proved, that this conveyance had been formerly seen among his father's papers at Percy-Hall; showed it had been recently recovered from Mr. Falconer's box of papers, and explained how it had been put there by mistake, and he supported this fact by

the evidence of Commissioner Falconer, father-in-law to the defendant. — Alfred rested his cause on these proofs, and waited, anxious to know what defence the defendant was prepared to make.

To his astonishment and consternation, Sir Robert's counsel produced another deed of Sir John Percy's, revoking the deed by which Sir John had made over his Hampshire estate to his younger grandson, Mr. Percy, it appearing by a clause in the original deed, that a power for this purpose had been therein reserved. This deed of revocation was handed to the judge, and to the jury, that it might be examined. — The two deeds were carefully compared. The nicest inspection could not discover any difference in the signature, or seal. When Mr. Friend examined them, he was in dismay! — The instrument appeared perfect. Whilst the jury were examining the deeds, Mr. Friend and Alfred had a moment to consult together.

"We are undone," whispered Mr.

Friend, "if they establish this deed of revocation, it sets us aside for ever."

Neither Mr. Friend, nor Alfred, had any doubt of its being a forgery, but those who had plunged thus desperately in guilt would probably be provided with perjury sufficient to support their iniquity.

"If we had been prepared!" said Mr. Friend, "but how could we be prepared for such a stroke? Even now, if we had time, we could summon witnesses who would discredit theirs, but"

"Do not despair," said Alfred, "still we have a chance, that their own witnesses may cross each other, or contradict themselves. Falsehood, with all its caution, is seldom consistent."

The trial proceeded. Alfred, in the midst of the fears and sighs of his friends, and of the triumphant smiles, and anticipating congratulations of his enemies, continued to keep both his temper and his understanding cool. His attention was fixed upon the evidence

produced, regardless of the various suggestions whispered, or written to him by ignorant or learned advisers.

William Clerke, the only surviving witness to the deed of revocation produced by Sir Robert, was the person, on whose evidence the cause principally rested. He was now summoned to appear, and room was made for him. He was upwards of eighty years of age; he came slowly into court, and stood supporting himself upon his staff, his head covered with thin gray hairs, his countenance placid and smiling, and his whole appearance so respectable, so venerable, as to prepossess immediately the jury and the court in his favor.

Alfred Percy could scarcely believe it possible, that such a man as this could be the person suborned to support a forgery.—After being sworn, he was desired to sit down, which he did, bowing respectfully to the court. Sir Robert Percy's counsel proceeded to examine him as to the points they desired to establish.

"Your name, Sir, is William Clerke, is it not?"

"My name is William Clerke," — answered the old man, in a feeble voice.

"Did you ever see this paper before?" showing him the deed.

"I did—I was present when Sir John Percy signed it, — he bid me witness it, that is, write my name at the bottom, which I did, and then he said, 'take notice, William Clerke, this is a deed, revoking the deed by which I made over my Hampshire estate to my youngest grandson, Lewis Percy.'"

The witness was going on, but the counsel interrupted. —

"You saw Sir John Percy sign this deed?—you are sure of that?"

"I am sure of that."

"Is this Sir John Percy's signature?"

"It is, — The very same I saw him write, and here is my own name, that he bid me write just there."

"You can swear, that this is your hand-writing."

"I can, I do." —

"Do you recollect what time Sir John Percy signed this deed?"

"Yes; about three or four days before his death."

"Very well, that is all we want of you, Mr. Clerke."

Alfred Percy desired, that Clerke should be detained in court, that he might cross-examine him. — The defendants went on, produced their evidence, examined all their witnesses, and established all they desired.

Then it came to Alfred's turn to cross-examine the witnesses, that had been produced by his adversary. — When William Clerke reappeared, Alfred, regarding him stedfastly, the old man's countenance changed a little, — but still he looked prepared to stand a cross-examination. — In spite of his efforts he trembled.

"Oh! you are trembling on the brink of the grave!" said Alfred, addressing him in a low, solemn tone, — "Pause and

reflect, whilst you are allowed a moment's time for reflection.—A few years must be all you have to spend in this world.—A few moments may take you to another,—to appear before a higher tribunal—before that judge, who knows our hearts, who sees into yours at this instant."

The staff in the old man's hand shook violently.

Sir Robert Percy's counsel interrupted—said that the witness should not be intimidated, and appealed to the court. But Alfred, observing that the judge was silent, proceeded. —

"You know, that you are upon your oath—this is probably the last oath . . . possibly the last words you may ever utter. . . . Look that they be true;—You know, that men have been struck dead whilst uttering falsehoods.—You are upon your oath— Did you see sir John Percy sign this deed?"

The old man attempted in vain to articulate.

“Give him time to recollect !” — cried the counsel on the opposite side, — “ Give him leave to see the writing now he has his spectacles.” —

He looked at the writing twice, — his head and hands shaking, so that he could not fix his spectacles. — The question was repeated by the judge. The old man grew pale as death. Sir Robert Percy, just opposite to him, cleared his throat to catch the witness’s attention, then darted at him such a look as only he could give.

“ Did I see Sir John Percy sign this deed ? ” — repeated William Clerke, — “ yes, I did.”

“ You hear, my Lord, you hear,” cried Sir Robert’s counsel, — “ The witness says he did. — There is no occasion further to intimidate this poor old man. He is not used to speak before such an audience. — There is no need of eloquence, all we want is truth. — The evidence is full, distinct, and positive. — My Lord, with your Lordship’s leave, I fancy we may dismiss him.”

They were going to hurry him away, but Alfred Percy said, that, with the permission of the Court, he must cross-examine that witness further, as the whole event of the trial depended upon the degree of credit, that might be given to his evidence.

By this time the old man had somewhat recovered himself; he saw, that his age, and reverend appearance, still prepossessed the jury in his favor, and from their looks, and from the whispers near him, he learned that his tremor and hesitation had not created any suspicion of guilt, but had been attributed rather to the sensibility of virtue, and the weakness of age. And now that the momentary emotion, which eloquence had produced on his mind had subsided, it turned to it's former state. — He recollected the bribe that had been promised him. — He was aware, that he had already sworn what, if he contradicted, might subject him to be prosecuted for perjury. He now stood obstinately resolved to persevere in

his iniquity. The first falsehoods pronounced, and believed, as he hoped, by the jury, the next would be easy.

"Your name is William Clarke, and, this," said Alfred (pointing to the witness's signature,) is your hand-writing?"

"Yes, I say it is." —

"You can write then?" — (putting a pen into his hand, he so good as to write a few words in the presence of the Court. — He took the pen, but, after making some fruitless attempts, replied,

"I am too old to write . . . I have not been able to write my name these many years. — Indeed! Sir, indeed! you are too hard upon one like me. — God knows," — said he looking up to Heaven, some thought with feeling, some suspected with hypocrisy. — "God knows, Sir! I speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. — Have you any more questions to put to me? — I am ready to tell all I know. — What interest have I to conceal any thing?" continued he; his

voice gaining strength and confidence as he went on repeating the lesson which he had been taught.

"It was long, a long while ago," he said; "since it had all happened; but thank Heaven, his memory had been spared him, and he remembered all that had passed, the same as if it was but yesterday. — He recollected how Sir John looked, where he sat, what he said when he signed this deed. — And, moreover, he had often before heard of a dislike Sir John had taken to his younger grandson . . . ay, to that young gentleman's father," — looking at Alfred — "And I was very sorry to hear it — very sorry there should be any dispute in the family, for I loved them all," said he, wiping his eyes — "Ay, I loved 'em all, and all alike, from the time they were in their cradles. — I remember too, once, Sir John said to me, William Clarke, says he, you are a faithful lad . . . for I was a lad once . . ."

Alfred had judiciously allowed the

witness to go on as far as he pleased with his story, in the expectation, that some exaggeration and contradiction would appear, but the judge now interrupted the old man, observing, that this was nothing to the purpose—that he must not take up the time of the court with idle tales, but that if he had any thing more to give in evidence respecting the deed, he should relate it.

The judge was thought to be severe—and the old man, after glancing his eye on the jury, bowed with an air of resignation, and an appearance of difficulty, which excited their compassion.

“We may let him go now, my Lord, may not we?” said Sir Robert Percy’s counsel.

“With the permission of his Lordship, I will ask one other question,”—said Alfred.

Now, it should be observed, that after the first examination of this witness, Alfred had heard him say to Mr. Sharpe—

"They forgot to bring out what I had to say about the seal."

To which Sharpe had replied —
"Enough without it." —

Alfred had examined the seal, and had observed that there was something underneath it — through a small hole in the parchment he saw something between the parchment and the sealing wax.

"You were present, I think you say, Mr. Clerke, not only when this deed was signed, but when it was sealed?" —

"I was, Sir," — cried Clerke, eager to bring out this part of the evidence, as it had been prepared for him. — "I surely was, and I remember it particularly, because of a little remarkable circumstance . . . Sir John, God bless him! . . . I think I see him now. — My Lord, under this seal," — continued the old man, addressing himself to the judge, and putting his shrivelled finger upon the seal. "Under this very seal, Sir

John put a sixpence And he called upon me to observe him doing it For, my Lord, it is my opinion, he thought then of what might come to pass, he had a sort of a foreboding of this day. — And now, my Lord, order them if you please, to break the seal. — Break it before them all. — And if there is not the sixpence under it, why this deed is not Sir John's . . . and this is none of my writing, and," cried he, lifting up his hands and eyes, "I am a liar, and perjured."

There was a profound silence. — The seal was broken. — The sixpence appeared. — It was handed in triumph, by Sir Robert Percy's counsel, to the jury and to the judge. There seemed to be no longer a doubt remaining in the minds of the jury — and a murmur of congratulations among the partisans of Sir Robert seemed to anticipate the verdict.

"'Tis all over I fear!" whispered Friend to Alfred — "Alfred, you have

done all that could be done. — But they have sworn through every thing. — It is over with us.”

“Not yet,” said Alfred, who all this time had kept silence with the utmost patience and calmness, Every eye turned upon him, some from pity, some from curiosity, to see how he bore his defeat. At length, when there was silence, he begged to be permitted to look at the sixpence. The judge ordered that it should be shown to him. He held it to the light to examine the date of the coin; he discovered a faint impression of the head of George the Third on the sixpence, and, upon closer inspection, he made out the date, and showed clearly, that it was a coin of the reign of George the Third. — Now the date of the forged deed was in the reign of George the Second, in which reign Sir John Percy died, so that there was an absolute impossibility, that this sixpence could have been put under the seal of the deed by Sir John.

By what slight circumstances are the most deep-laid villanies sometimes discovered! —

The moment Alfred stated this fact, the counsel on the opposite side took the sixpence, examined it, threw down his brief, and left the court. — People looked at each other in astonishment. The judge ordered, that William Clerke should be detained, that he might be prosecuted by the crown for perjury.

The old man fell back senseless. — Mr. Sharpe and Sir Robert Percy pushed their way together out of court, and all who had till now appeared as their friends disclaimed them. No further evidence was offered, so that here the trial closed. The judge gave a short, impressive charge to the jury, who, without withdrawing, instantly gave their verdict in favor of the plaintiff, Lewis Percy, — a verdict that was received with loud acclamations, which, not even respect to the court could restrain.

Alfred hastily shook hands with his

friends, and in the midst of universal applause and congratulations hurried away to carry the good news to his father.—The pleasure of gaining a thousand estates, a thousand victories, could not equal the delight he felt at this moment; for how much are all the triumphs of interest or ambition inferior to the warm joy of affection!

Erasmus and Mr. Temple accompanied Alfred to the King's Bench. The gaoler knew and liked Alfred Percy, was interested for the whole family, and as he saw the joyful event in his countenance, the doors of the prison flew open before him.—He reached his father's room.

“Stop, my dear Son! before you speak, let me assure you, that I am prepared for the worst, and that whatever may be the event, I am convinced that *you* have done all which ability, energy, and affection could do, to restore me to liberty and fortune.—Now speak.”——

"Joy, dear mother! he is free. — Liberty, fortune restored!" —

His mother his sisters, embraced Alfred, in quick succession, with tears of delight. — For some moments a spectator might have imagined that they beheld a family in deep affliction. But soon through these tears appeared on the countenance of each individual the radiance of joy — smiles of affection — tenderness — gratitude, and every delightful, benignant feeling of the human heart.

"Has any body sent to Mrs. Hungerford, to Lady Jane Granville?" said Mr. Percy.

"Yes, yes, messengers were sent off the moment the verdict was given," said Erasmus — "I took care of that."

"Thank you, my dear Erasmus — always kind — Rosamond, remember your promise to Mr. Temple. — He has a right to this hand, and let me give it to him — No, he shall receive it from his friend Alfred. — Caroline, my love, you and your husband will meet in perfect

happiness, and the sacrifice you have made for your father will make you dearer to such a husband.—I had hopes, my love,” continued Mr. Percy, turning to Mrs. Percy, that “Godfrey would have been here by this time—but it is best as it is, we have that pleasure still in store. — And now, my beloved children, after having returned thanks to Providence, let me here, in the midst of all of you, to whom I owe my happiness, sit down quietly for a few minutes, and enjoy the sober certainty of waking bliss.”

CHAPTER XLIII.

MR. PERCY, released from prison, was welcomed with kindness and exultation at the house of Lady Jane Granville, where his family, assembled once more in happiness, were again surrounded by all the friends who had been present at Caroline's wedding, and again congratulations were heard in all parts of the hospitable mansion. In the midst of this tumult of joy Mr. Percy wrote two letters. One was to his faithful old steward, John Nelson, who deserved from his master this mark of regard; the other was to Commissioner Falconer, to make him some friendly offers of assistance in his own affairs, and to beg that through him his daughter, the unhappy and deserted lady of Sir Robert Percy, might be assured, that neither Mr. Percy, nor any

of his family, wished to put *her* to inconvenience, and that, far from being in haste to return to Percy-Hall, they wished to wait in town for the arrival of Godfrey and of Count Altenberg, therefore they requested that she would not hasten her removal from any false idea of their impatience.

We said *the deserted lady of Sir Robert Percy*, for Sir Robert had fled from the country. On quitting the court after the trial, he took all the ready money he had previously collected from his tenants, and set out for the Continent, leaving only a note for his wife, apprising her, that "she should never see him more, and ordering her to return to her father and mother, as he had no means left to support her extravagance."

Of the words of this brutal farewell, and of the circumstances of Sir Robert's flight, Mr. Percy was informed by Lady Jane Granville, who had heard them from her maid Keppel, to whom Lydia Sharpe had paid a visit, on purpose to

talk over "this total disruption of Lady Percy's affairs, and the ruin in one way or other of all the Falconers, which, now it had happened, there was, she hoped, no sin in saying she had long foreseen."

Commissioner Falconer was at this time at Falconer-Court, where he had been obliged to go to settle some business with his tenantry, previous to the sale of his land for the redemption of Cunningham. The Commissioner's answer to Mr. Percy's letter was as follows:

"I cannot tell you, my dear Sir, how much I was touched by the kindness of your letter and conduct—So different from what I have met with from others.—I will not cloud your happiness, in which, believe me, I heartily rejoice—by the melancholy detail of all my own sorrows and disappointments—but only answer briefly to your friendly inquiries respecting my affairs.

"And first, for my unfortunate married daughter, who has been in this ter-

rible manner returned upon our hands. She thanks you for your indulgence, on which she will not encroach. Before you receive this, she will have left Percy-Hall. She is going to live with a Miss Clapham, a great heiress, who wants a fashionable companion and chaperon. Mrs. Falconer became acquainted with her at Tunbridge, and has devised this plan for Arabella. I fear Bell's disposition will not suit such a situation, but she has no other resource.

“ Mrs. Falconer and Georgiana have so *overmanaged* matters with respect to Petcalf, that it has ended, as I long since feared it would, in his breaking off. If Mrs. Falconer had taken my advice, Georgiana might now be completely settled. Instead of which she is fitting out for India. She is going to be sure in good company; but in my opinion the expense, (which Heaven knows I can ill afford), will be thrown away like all the rest, for Georgiana has been much worn by late hours, and though still young,

has, I fear, lost her bloom, and looks rather old for India.

“ I am truly obliged to you, my dear Sir, for your friendly offer with respect to Falconer-Court, and have in consequence stopped the sale of the furniture. I shall rejoice to have such a good tenant as Mr. Temple. It is indeed much more agreeable to me to let, than to sell. The fixing down the rent, as you propose, will put it in my power to release Cunningham, which is my most pressing difficulty.

“ As you are the only person in the world now, who takes an interest in my affairs, or to whom I can safely unburden my mind, I must, though I know complaint to be useless, relieve my heart by it for a moment. I can safely say, that for the last ten years of my life I have never spent a day *for myself*. I have been continually planning and toiling to advance my family, not an opportunity has been neglected, and yet from this very family springs all my unhappi-

ness. Even Mrs. Falconer blames me as the cause of that *sad business*, which has disgraced us for ever, and deprived us of all our friends — and has afforded an excuse for breaking all promises. There are many, whom I will not name, but they are persons now high in office, who have I may venture to say it to you, used me shamefully ill.

“Many an honest tradesman and manufacturer, to say nothing of men of talents in the liberal professions, I have seen in the course of the last forty years make their own fortunes, and large fortunes, while I have ended worse than I began — have literally been working all my life for others, not only without reward, but without thanks. If I were to begin life again, I certainly should follow your principles, my dear Sir, and depend more upon myself, and less upon others, than I have done — But now all is over. — Let me assure you, that in the midst of my own misfortunes, I rejoice in your prosperity (and in the esteem

and respect with which I hear you and yours spoken of by all.

“ Present my affectionate regards and congratulations to Mrs. Percy, and to all your amiable and happy circle. Propriety and feeling for my poor daughter, Lady Percy, must prevent my paying at present my personal congratulations to you at Percy-Hall— But I trust you will not the less believe in the sincerity of my attachment.

“ I am, my dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful

Friend and servant,

I am, Sir, T. FALCONER.”

“ P. S. I have just learnt, that the little place I mentioned to Mr. Alfred Percy, when we last met, is not disposed of. — Lord Oldborough's influence, as Mr. Temple well knows, is still all powerful, and your interest with his Lordship, you must be sensible, is greater than that of any other person living without exception. — A word from you would do the business for me. It is but a trifle, which

"I should once have been ashamed to ask: but it is now a matter of necessity."

The event of the trial, and the restoration of the Percy family to their property, were heard with transports of joy by the old tenantry. They had not needed the effect of contrast, to make them love and feel the value of their good landlord; but certainly Sir Robert Percy's tyranny, and all that he had made them suffer for their obstinate fidelity to the *old branch*, had heightened and fortified their attachment. It was now their turn to glory in that honest obstinacy, and with the strong English sense of justice they triumphed in having the rightful owners restored to their estate, and to the seat of their ancestors.

As the Percy family crossed the well-known bridge at the end of the village, those bells, which had sounded so mournfully, which had been muffled when they quitted their home, now rang out a merry triumphant peal—And it was rung by the hands of the very same persons

who had formerly given that proof of attachment to him in his adversity, and which had so touched Mr. Percy.— Emotion as strong now seized his heart. —At the same spot he jumped out of the carriage. and by the same path along which he had hastened to stop the bell-ringers, lest they should ruin themselves with Sir Robert, he now hastened to see and thank these honest, courageous people. — In passing through the village, which had been freshly swept and garished, the people whom he remembered to have seen in tears following the carriage at their departure were now crowding to their doors with faces bright with smiles — Hats that had never stirred, and backs that had never bent for the usurper, were now eager with low bows to mark their proud respect to the true man. There was no noisy acclamations, for all were touched. The voices of the young children, however, were heard, who, as their mothers held them up in their arms, to see the landlord, of whom

they had heard so much, offered their little nosegays as the open carriage passed, and repeated blessings on those on whom from their cradles they had heard blessings bestowed by their parents.

The old steward stood ready at the park-gate to open it for his master. His master and the ladies put their hands out of the carriage to shake hands with him, but he could not stand it.—He just touched his master's hand. Tears streamed down his face, and turning away without being able to say one word, he hid himself in the porter's lodge.

As they drove up to the house they saw standing on the steps, waiting—and long had he been waiting there, for the first sound of the carriage, Johnson, the butler, who had followed the family to the Hills, and had served them in their fallen fortunes—Johnson was now himself. Before the hall-door, wide open to receive them, he stood, with the livery servants in due order.

in perfect happiness.—Caroline, his bride, his wife, radiant with joy and love, he, at last, pressed to his heart, now, and for ever, his own Caroline.

Mrs. Hungerford had the delight of seeing and sympathising in their felicity. With all the enthusiastic warmth of affection, supposed to be peculiar to youth, this excellent lady enjoyed, in the decline of life, the happiness of her friends. On purpose to be with the Percys on their return home, and to honor, by her presence, the marriage of Rosamond, she had made, with much expedition, a long journey from Pembroke to Percy-Hall.—She was recompensed, as she said, beyond her utmost hopes, by arriving just in time to see the reunion of Caroline and her husband.

Beloved as Rosamond was by rich and poor in the neighborhood, and the general favorite of her family, her approaching marriage spread now and universal joy.—It is impossible to give a just idea of the congratulations, and of

the bustle of the various preparations, which were going on at this time at Percy-Hall, especially in the lower regions. Even Mrs. Harte's all regulating genius was insufficient for the exigencies of the times. Indeed, her head and her heart were now at perpetual variance, continually counteracting and contradicting each other. — One moment delighted with the joy and affection of the world below, she would come up to boast of it to her mistress and her young ladies; the next moment she would scold all the people for being out of their wits, and for not minding or knowing a single thing they were doing, or ordered to do, "no more than the babes in the wood;" then proving the next minute, and acknowledging, that she was "*really quite as bad as themselves.* — And no wonder, for the thoughts of Miss Rosamond's marriage had turned her head entirely upside down — for she had been at Miss Rosamond's christening, held her proxy, and considered her always as her

particular own child, and well she might, for a better, except, perhaps, Miss Caroline—I should say the Countess—never breathed.”

The making a *desert* island for Miss Rosamond's wedding dinner was the object, which had taken such forcible possession of Mrs. Harte's imagination, that, till it was accomplished, it was in vain to hope, that any other could, in her eyes, appear in any kind of proportion. In the midst of all the sentimental joy above stairs, and in the midst of all the important business of settlements and lawyers, Mrs. Harte was pursuing the settled purpose of her soul, constructing with infinite care, as directed by her “*Complete English Housekeeper*,” a desert island for a wedding, in a deep china dish, with a mount in the middle, two figures upon the mount, with crowns on their heads, a knot of rock candy at their feet, and gravel walks of *shot confits* judiciously intersecting in every direction their dominions.

CHAPTER XLIV.

As soon as it was possible, after his return to Percy-Hall, Mr. Percy went to pay his respects to Lord Oldborough. He found this great statesman happy in retirement, without any affectation of happiness. There were proofs in every thing about him, that his mind had unbent itself agreeably; his powers had expanded upon different objects, building, planting, improving the soil and the people.

He had many tastes, which had long lain dormant, or rather which had been held in subjugation by one tyrant passion. That passion vanquished, the former tastes resumed their activity. — The superior strength of his character was shown in his never recurring to ambition. Its vigour was displayed in the

means by which he supplied himself not only with variety of occupation, but with variety of motive.—Those who best know the human mind, must be aware of the difficulty of supplying motive for one accustomed to stimulus of so high a kind as that, to which Lord Oldborough had been habituated. For one who had been at the head of the government of a great nation, to make for himself objects in the stillness and privacy of a country life, required no common talent and energy of soul.—The difficulty was increased to Lord Oldborough, for to him the vast resource of a taste for literature was wanting.—

The biographer of Sir Robert Walpole tells us, that, “though he had not forgotten his classical attainments, he had little taste for literary occupations.” Sir Robert once expressed his regret on this subject to Mr. Fox, in the library at Houghton. — “I wish,” he said, “I took as much delight in reading as you do, it would be the means of alleviating

many tedious hours in my present retirement. But, to my misfortune, I derive no pleasure from such pursuits."

Lord Oldborough felt, but never condescended to complain of that deficiency of general literature, which was caused in him partly by his not having had time for the attainment, and partly by his having formed too low an estimate of the influence and power of literature in the political world — But he now took peculiar delight in recalling classical literature, in which he had in his youth excelled; as Mr. Percy sympathised with him in this taste, there was another point in which they coalesced — Mr. Percy staid with his old friend some days, for he was anxious to give him this proof of attachment, and felt interested in seeing his character develop itself in a new direction, displaying fresh life and strength, and unexpected resource in circumstances, in which statesmen of the most vigorous minds, and of the highest spirit, have

been seen "to droop and drowse," to sink into indolence, sensuality, or the horrors of hypochondriacism and superstition.—

Lord Oldborough, on his first retiring to Clermont-Park, had informed Mr. Percy, that he should wish to see him, as soon as he had arranged certain papers. The arrival of Count Altenberg, the marriage of Caroline, and Mr. Percy's long imprisonment, which followed, had prevented his recollecting this message till his present visit. He now reminded his Lordship of it, and Lord Oldborough put into his hands a sketch, which he had been drawing out, of the principal transactions in which he had been engaged during his political career, with copies of his letters to the first public characters of the day, in our own and in foreign countries — Even by those who had felt no regard for the man, the letters of such a minister would have been read with avidity; but Mr. Percy perused them with a stronger in-

terest than any which could be created by mere political or philosophical curiosity — He read them with the pleasure which a generous mind takes in admiring that which is good and great, with the delight which a true friend feels in seeing proofs, that justify all the esteem he had previously felt. — He saw in these original documents, in this history of Lord Oldborough's political life, the most perfect consistency and integrity, the most disinterested and enlightened patriotism. When Mr. Percy returned the manuscript to his Lordship, he spoke of the satisfaction he must experience, in looking back upon this record of a life spent in the service of his country, and observed, that he was not surprised that, with such a solid source of self-approbation, such indefeasible claims to the gratitude of his countrymen, and such well-earned fame, he should be, as he appeared, so happy in retirement.

“ I am happy, and, I believe, princi-

pally from the cause you have mentioned" — said Lord Oldborough, who had a mind too great for the affectation of humility — "So far I am happy" —

"Yet" — added he, after a considerable pause, "I have, I feel, a greater capability of happiness, for which I have been prevented from making any provision, partly by the course of life, of which I made choice, and partly by circumstances, over which I had no control." —

He paused again — And turning the conversation, spoke of his sister, an elderly lady, who had come to pass some time with him — They had lived separate almost all their lives; she in Scotland with her husband, a Scottish nobleman, who having died about the time when Lord Oldborough had resigned his ministerial situation, she had accepted his Lordship's invitation to visit him in his retirement. The early attachment he had had for this sister seemed to revive in his mind when they met, and, as if glad to

have some object for his affections, they were poured out upon her — Mr. Percy observed a tenderness in his manner and voice when he spoke to her, a thousand little attentions, which no one would have expected from the apparently stern Lord Oldborough, a man who had been engrossed all his life by politics.

On the morning of the last day which Mr. Percy meant to spend at Clermont-Park, his Lordship, as they were sitting together in his study, expressed more than common regret at the necessity for his friend's departure, but said,

“ I have no right to detain you from your family ” —

Then, after a pause, he added —

“ Mr. Percy, you first gave me the idea, that a private life is the happiest.”

“ My Lord, in most cases I believe it is ; but I never meant to assert, that a public life spent in noble exertion, and with the consciousness of superior talent and utility, is not more desirable than the life of any obscure individual can

possibly be, even though he possess the pleasures of domestic ease and tranquillity. — There are men of eminent abilities, capable of extraordinary exertions, inspired by exalted patriotism . . . I believe — notwithstanding the corruption of so many has weakened all faith in public virtue — I believe in the existence of such men — men, who devote themselves to the service of their country, — when the time for their relinquishing the toils of public life arrives, honor and self-approbation follow them in retirement.

“It is true, I am happy,” — repeated Lord Oldborough; “but to go on with what I began to say to you yesterday. — I feel that some addition might be made to my happiness. — The sense of having, to the best of my ability, done my duty, is satisfactory. — I do not require applause — I disdain adulation — I have sustained my public life without sympathy — I could seldom meet with it — Where I could, I have enjoyed it — and

could now enjoy it — exquisitely — as you do, Mr. Percy — surrounded by a happy family. — Domestic life requires domestic pleasures — objects for the affections.”

Mr. Percy felt the truth of this, and could answer only by suggesting the idea of Mr. Temple, who was firmly and warmly attached to Lord Oldborough, and for whom his Lordship had a strong regard.

“ Mr. Temple, and my daughter Rosamond, whom your Lordship honored with so kind an invitation, propose, I know, paying their respects to you next week. — Though I am her father, I may venture to say, that Rosamond’s sprightliness is so mixed with solid information and good sense, that her society will become agreeable to your Lordship.”

“ I shall rejoice to see Mrs. Temple here. — As the daughter of one friend, and the wife of another, she has a double claim to my regard. And, (to say nothing of hereditary genius or dispositions — in which you do not believe, and

I do), there can be no doubt, that the society of a lady, educated as Mrs. Temple has been, must suit my taste. The danger is, that her society should become necessary to me. For Mr. Temple I already feel a degree of affection, which I must repress, rather than indulge."

"Repress!—Why so, my Lord.—You esteem him? you believe in the sincerity of his attachment?"

"I do."

"Then why with stoicism—pardon me, my dear Lord—why repress affection?"

"Lest I should become dependent for my daily happiness on one, whose happiness is independent of mine—in some degree incompatible with mine.—Even if his society were given to me, his heart must be at his home, and with his family.—You see I am no proud stoic.—But a man who dares to look at life . . . the decline of life, such as it is—as it must be.—Different, Mr. Percy, in your situation—and in mine."

The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of a carriage —

Lord Oldborough looked out of the window as it passed—then smiled, and observed how altered the times were, since Clermont-Park used to be crowded with visitors and carriages — now the arrival of one is an event.

The servant announced a foreign name — A Neapolitan Abbé, who had come over in the train of a new ambassador, he had just arrived in England, and had letters from the Cardinal * * * *, his uncle, which he was desired to deliver into Lord Oldborough's own hand. The Abbé was, it appeared, personally a stranger to him, but there had been some ministerial intercourse between his Lordship and the Cardinal. Lord Oldborough received these political letters with an air of composure and indifference, which proved, that he ceased to have an interest in the game.

“He supposed,” he said, “that the Abbé had been apprised, that he was no longer

one of his Majesty's ministers — that he had resigned his official situation, had retired, and that he took no part whatever in public affairs."

The Abbé replied, that he had been apprised, that Lord Oldborough had retired from his public office; but his uncle, he added, with a significant smile, was aware that Lord Oldborough's influence was as great still as it had ever been, and greater than that of any ostensible minister.

This Lord Oldborough disclaimed — coolly observing, that his influence, whatever it might be, could not be known even to himself, as it was never exerted, — and that as he had determined never more to interfere in public business, he could not be of the least political service to the Cardinal. The Duke of Greenwich was now the person, to whom on such subjects all applications should be addressed.

The Abbé, however, repeated, that his instructions from the Cardinal were positive and peremptory, to deliver these

letters into no hands but those of Lord Oldborough — That in consequence of this strict injunction, he had come purposely to present them. He was instructed to request his Lordship would not put the letters into the hands of any secretary, but would have the goodness to examine them himself, and give his counsel how to proceed, and to whom they should, in case of his Lordship's declining to interfere, be addressed.

“ Mr. Percy ! ” — said Lord Oldborough, recalling Mr. Percy, who had risen to quit the room — “ You will not leave me — Whatever you may wish to say, M. l'Abbé, may be said before this gentleman — my friend.”

His Lordship then opened the packet, examined the letters — read and redirected some to the Duke of Greenwich — others to the King.

The Abbé, all the time, descanting vehemently on Neapolitan politics — regretting Lord Oldborough's resignation — adverting still to his Lordship's powerful

influence — and pressing some point in negotiation, for which his uncle the Cardinal, was most anxious.

Among the letters, there was one which Lord Oldborough did not open; he laid it on the table with the direction downwards, leaned his elbow upon it, and sat as if calmly listening to the Abbé; but Mr. Peroy, knowing his countenance, saw signs of extraordinary emotion, with difficulty repressed.

At length the gesticulating Abbé finished, and waited his Lordship's instructions.

They were given in few words — The letters redirected to the King and the Duke of Greenwich were returned to him. He thanked his Lordship with many Italian superlatives — declined his Lordship's invitation to stay till the next day at Clermont-Park — said he was pressed in point of time, that it was indispensably necessary for him to be in London, to deliver these papers as soon as possible. — His eye glanced on the unopened letter —

“ Private, Sir, — said Lord Oldborough, in a stern voice — without moving his elbow from the paper — “ Whatever answer it may require, I shall have the honor to transmit to you — for the Cardinal ” —

The Abbé bowed low — left his address — and took leave — Lord Oldborough, after attending him to the door, and seeing him depart, returned, took out his watch, and said to Mr. Percy —

“ Come to me, in my cabinet, in five minutes.”

Seeing his sister on the walk approaching his house, he added,

“ Let none follow me.”

When the five minutes were over, Mr. Percy went to Lord Oldborough’s cabinet — knocked — no answer — knocked again — louder — all was silent — he entered — and saw Lord Oldborough seated, but in the attitude of one just going to rise, he looked more like a statue than a living person; there was a stiffness in his muscles, and over

his face and hands a death-like colour—His eyes were fixed, and directed towards the door—but they never moved when Mr. Percy entered, nor did Lord Oldborough stir at his approach——From one hand, which hung over the arm of his chair, his spectacles had dropped; his other hand grasped an open letter——

“My dear Lord!” cried Mr. Percy.

He neither heard nor answered——Mr. Percy opened the window and let down the blind. Then attempting to raise the hand which hung down, he perceived it was fixed in all the rigidity of catalepsy. In hopes of recalling his senses or his power of motion, Mr. Percy determined to try to draw the letter from his grasp; the moment the letter was touched, Lord Oldborough started—his eyes darting fiercely upon him.

“Who dares?——Who are you, Sir?” tried he.

“Your friend, Percy—my Lord.”

Lord Oldborough pointed to a chair—
Mr. Percy sat down——His Lordship recovered gradually from the species of trance into which he had fallen. The cataleptic rigidity of his figure relaxed—the colour of life returned—the body regained her functions—the soul resumed at once her powers——Without seeming sensible of any interruption or intermission of feeling or thought, Lord Oldborough went on speaking to Mr. Percy.

“Upon you, Mr Percy, I can depend as upon myself. Injunctions of secrecy are unnecessary to a man of honor——The letter, which I now hold in my hand, is from that Italian lady of transcendent beauty, in whose company you once saw me when we first met at Naples.—She was of high rank—high endowments.—I loved her—how well—I need not—cannot say—She gave me reason to believe she was attached to me.—I was induced—no matter how—to suspect her fidelity—pass over these cir-

cumstances—I cannot speak, or think of them.—We parted, I never saw her more.—She retired to a convent.—Nor did I, till I received this letter, written on her death-bed, know that she had given me a son.—The proofs that I wronged her are irresistible—Would that they had been given to me when I could have repaired my injustice!—But her pride prevented their being sent till the hour of her death.”

On the first reading of her letter, Lord Oldborough had been so struck by the idea of the injustice he had done the mother, that he seemed scarcely to advert to the idea of his having a son—Absorbed in the past, he was at first insensible both to the present and the future. Early associations, long dormant, were suddenly awakened; he was carried back with irresistible force to the days of his youth, and something of likeness in air and voice to the Lord Oldborough he had formerly known appeared to Mr. Percy—As the tumult of passionate re-

collections subsided, as this enthusiastic reminiscence faded ; and the memory of the past gave way to the sense of the present, Lord Oldborough resumed his habitual look and manner — His thoughts turned upon his son, that unknown being who belonged to him, who had claims upon him, who might form a great addition to the happiness or misery of his life. — He took up the letter again, looked for the passage that related to his son, and read it anxiously to himself, then to Mr. Percy — observing, “ that the directions were so vague, that it would be difficult to act upon them.”

“ The boy was sent when three years old to England or Ireland, under the care of an Irish Priest, who delivered him to a merchant, recommended by the Ham-burgh banker, &c.”

“ I shall have difficulty in tracing this, — Great danger of being mistaken or deceived,” said Lord Oldborough, — pausing — with a look of anxiety, — “ Would to God ! that I had means of

knowing with certainty, *where* and above all, *what* he is, — or — that I had never heard of his existence !” —

“ My Lord, are there any more particulars ? ” inquired Mr. Percy, eagerly.

Lord Oldborough continued to read, “ Four hundred Pounds of your English money have been remitted to him annually, by means of these Hamburgh bankers. — To them we must apply in the first instance,” said Lord Oldborough, “ and I will write this moment.”

“ I think my Lord, I can save you the trouble,” said Mr. Percy, — “ I know the man.” . . .

Lord Oldborough put down his pen, and looked at Mr. Percy with astonishment.

“ Yes my Lord, however extraordinary it may appear, I repeat it — I believe I know your son, and if he be the man I imagine him to be, I congratulate you, — you have reason to rejoice.”

“ The facts my dear Sir,” cried Lord

Oldborough, —— “ Do not raise my hopes.”

Mr. Percy repeated all that he had heard from Godfrey of Mr. Henry, related every circumstance from the first commencement of them — The impertinence and insult to which the mystery that hung over his birth had subjected him in the regiment — the quarrels in the regiment — the goodness of Major Gascoigne — the gratitude of Mr. Henry — the attachment between him and Godfrey, his selling out of the regiment after Godfrey's ineffectual journey to London, his wishing to go into a mercantile house — the letter which Godfrey then wrote, begging his father to recommend Mr. Henry to Mr. Gresham, disclosing to Mr. Percy, with Henry's permission, all that he knew of his birth. —

“ I have that letter at home,” — said Mr. Percy — “ your Lordship shall see it — I perfectly recollect the circumstances of Mr. Henry's having been brought up in Ireland by a Dublin merchant,

and having received constantly a remittance in quarterly payments of four hundred pounds a year, from a banker in Cork."

"Did he inquire why, or from whom," said Lord Oldborough — "and does he know his mother?"

"Certainly not, the answer to his first inquiries prevented all farther questions — He was told by the bankers, that they had directions to stop payment of the remittance, if any questions were asked."

Lord Oldborough listened with profound attention, as Mr. Percy went on with the history of Mr. Henry, relating all the circumstances of his honorable conduct with respect to Miss Panton — his disinterestedness, decision, and energy of affection. —

Lord Oldborough's emotion increased, he seemed to recognise some traits of his own character.

"I *hope* this youth is my son," — said his Lordship, in a low suppressed voice,

“He deserves to be yours my Lord,” — said Mr. Percy.

“To have a son might be the greatest of evils — To have *such* a son, must be the greatest of blessings,” said his Lordship, — he was lost in thought for a moment, then exclaimed, — “I must see the letter — I must see the man.” —

“My Lord he is at my house.” —

Lord Oldborough started from his seat, “Let me see him instantly.” —

“To morrow my Lord,” said Mr. Percy, in a calm tone, for it was necessary to calm his impetuosity. — “To morrow — Mr. Henry could not be brought here to night, without alarming him, or without betraying to him the cause of our anxiety.”

“To morrow let it be — you are right my dear friend. Let me see him without his suspecting, that I am any thing to him, or he to me — you will let me have the letter to night?”

“Certainly my Lord.” —

Mr. Percy sympathised with his impatience, and gratified it with all the celerity of a friend — The letter was sent that night to Lord Oldborough. In questioning his sons more particularly concerning Mr. Henry, Mr. Percy learnt from Erasmus a fresh and strong corroborating circumstance. Dr. Percy had been lately attending Mr. Gresham's porter, O'Brien, the Irishman; who had been so ill, that, imagining himself dying, he had sent for a priest. — Mr. Henry was standing by the poor fellow's bedside, when the priest arrived, who was so much struck by the sight of him, that for some time his attention could scarcely be fixed on the sick man. The priest, after he had performed his official duties, returned to Mr. Henry, begged pardon for having looked at him with so much earnestness, but said, that Mr. Henry strongly reminded him of the features of an Italian lady, who had committed a child to his care many years ago. This led to

further explanation, and upon comparing dates and circumstances, Henry was convinced, that this was the very priest who had carried him over to Ireland; ~~the~~ the priest recognized him to be the child, of whom he had taken charge—But farther all was darkness.—The priest knew nothing more—not even the name of the lady, from whom he had received the child.—He ~~knew~~ only, that he had been handsomely rewarded by the Dublin merchant, to whom he had delivered the boy—and he had heard, that this merchant had since become bankrupt, and had fled to America.—This promise of a discovery, and sudden stop to his hopes, had only mortified poor Henry, and had irritated that curiosity, which he had endeavored to lull to repose.

Mr. Percy was careful, both for Mr. Henry's sake and for Lord Oldborough's, not to excite hopes, which might not ultimately be accomplished. He took precautions to prevent him from suspecting any thing extraordinary in the in-

tended introduction to Lord Oldborough.

There had been some dispute between the present minister, and some London merchant, about the terms of a loan, which had been made by Lord Oldborough—Mr. Gresham's house had some concern in this transaction; and it was now settled between Mr. Percy and Lord Oldborough, that his Lordship should write to desire to see Henry, who, as Mr. Gresham's partner, could give every necessary information—Henry accordingly was summoned to Clermont-Park, and accompanied Mr. Percy, with his mind intent upon this business.

Mr. Henry, in common with all, who were capable of estimating a great public character, had conceived high admiration for Lord Oldborough; he had seen him only in public, and at a distance—and it was not without awe, that he now thought of being introduced to him, and of hearing and speaking to him in private.

Lord Oldborough, meanwhile, who had been satisfied by the perusal of the letter, and by Mr. Percy's information, waited for his arrival with extreme impatience—He was walking up and down his room, and looking frequently at his watch, which he believed more than once to have stopped. At length the door opened.

“ Mr. Percy, and Mr. Henry, my Lord.”

Lord Oldborough's eye darted upon Henry.—Struck instantly with the resemblance to the mother, Lord Oldborough rushed forward, and clasping him in his arms, exclaimed,

“ My son ! He is my son ! ”

Tenderness, excessive tenderness, was in his look, voice, soul, as if he wished to repair in a moment the injustice of years.

“ Yes,” said Lord Oldborough,—
“ *now*—I am happy,—*now*, I also, Mr. Percy, may be proud of a son—I too

shall know the pleasures of domestic life.——Now I am happy!"——repeated he,——

“ And, pleas'd, resign'd
“ To tender passions all his mighty mind.”

March 26th, 1813.

THE END.

